Burpham High Field Excavation 2026 Project Design

Contents

Location Maps....3
Introduction....4
Summary....4
Site Location and Geology....4
Site Location....4
Geology....5
Historical Background....5
Archaeological Background....9
Aerial Photographs....9
LiDAR....10
HER Records....10
Other Evidence....10
Research Aims....11
Main Aims....11
Second Aim....11
Third Aim....11
Methodology....12
Geophysical Survey....12
Geophysical Survey Results....12
Evaluation Trenches....13
Primary Aim....13
Second and Third Aim....14
Recording....14
Metal Detecting....14
Site Records....14
Context and Feature Recording....14
Drawings....14
Surveying....15

Artefacts..... 15
Small Finds Policy..... 15
Finds Retention..... 15
Environmental Material.....15
Metal Detecting.....16
Timescales and Duration of Work..... 16
Land Ownership and Access..... 16
Restrictions..... 16
Written Report.....16
Deposition of Archive and Finds.....17
Archive..... 17
Finds.....17
Finds Tent and Equipment Storage..... 17
Risk Assessment..... 17
Health and Safety Issues.....17
Standard Risk Assessment..... 18
Services.....18
Finance and Expenses..... 18
Excavation Key Items..... 18
Insurance.....19
Car Parking, Water and Toilets..... 19
Site Supervision.....19
Appendix A Banjo Enclosures..... 20
Appendix B WSCC HER References.....20
References.....21

Location Maps

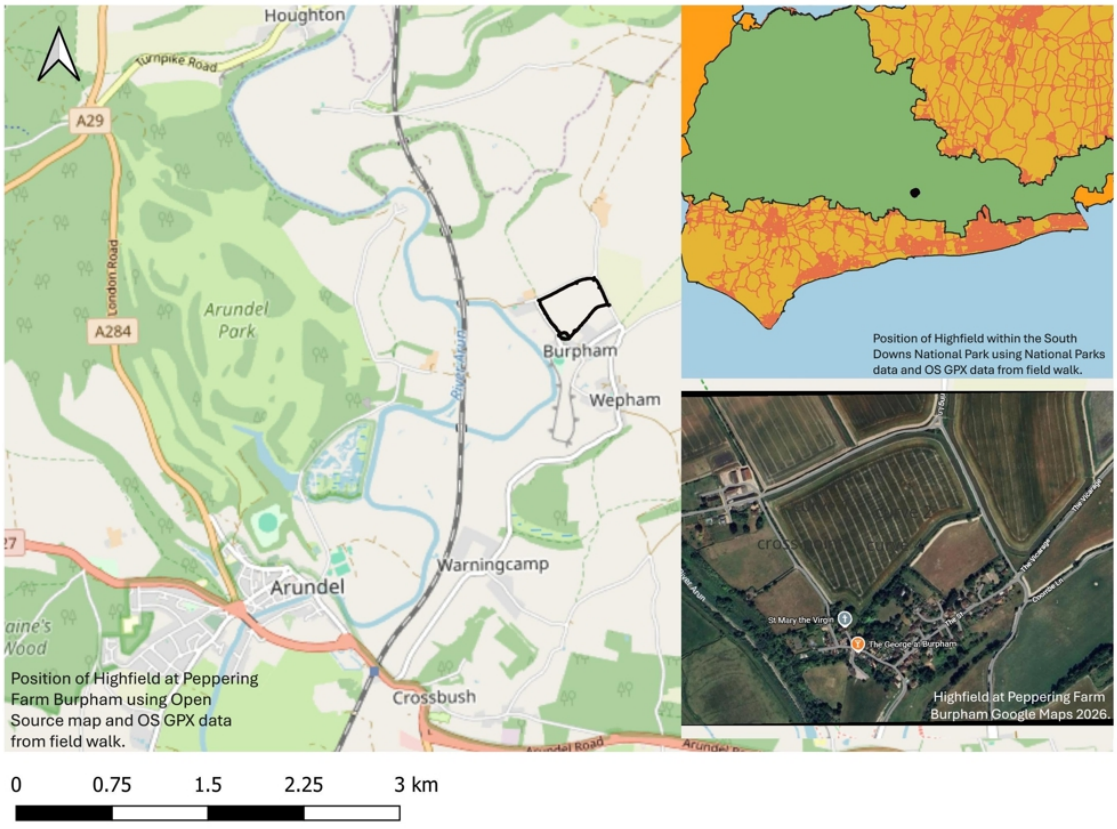


Figure 1: Location of Burpham and High Field

Introduction

Summary

Following on from two seasons of excavations by Worthing Archaeological Society Field Unit (WASFU) at the village of Burpham, the opportunity has arisen to investigate possible earthworks in an area (High Field) immediately to the north of Burpham church.

This will involve the excavation (by hand) of six evaluation trenches, whose location will be based on Aerial Photographs and geophysical survey (survey to be undertaken in August 2026).

The excavation is scheduled to take 10 days commencing on Saturday 22nd August (depending on the crop being harvested). This will be proceeded by the geophysical survey, a site survey and establishment of a Base Camp (setting up of finds tent and transportation of equipment etc).

The current plan is for backfilling to be undertaken by a contracted mechanical digger.

The site code for this project is **BPH26**.

Following post-excavation work, the site archive will be deposited at Worthing Museum.

Site Location and Geology

Site Location

High field is located immediately to the north of the parish church (St Mary's). Beyond the eastern boundary of the field, the ground gradually drops away onto the Arun floodplain and the river Arun itself. The northern boundary is marked by the lane from Peppering Farm to Peppering Green and the eastern boundary by Peppering Lane, which goes to Peppering High Barn. The NE corner of the field is at Peppering Green.

The site is centred on TQ03985 09230. The land slopes from the NE corner of the field at 44m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) down to the SW corner at the church and western boundary of the field, which is below the 25m contour line.

Geology

The site is located on the Newhaven Chalk Formation (formerly Upper Chalk) supporting a shallow rendzina soil (a friable plough soil). Based on excavations undertaken in 2024 in gardens to the south of High Field this plough soil could be between 0.2m and 0.4m deep.

Historical Background

All the following maps have been sourced from the National Museum of Scotland's online collection of OS maps.

There doesn't appear to be any changes in the outline of the field from 1876 (figure 6) through to the present day (1975). The footpath from the NE corner of the field, running in a SW direction appears on all the maps following the same course.

In 1876 and 1879 the nearest farm settlement was called Peppering, with the settlement to the north of Peppering Lane/Green described as Peppering Farm.

In 1961 and 1975 the names of both settlements had changed. Peppering to Peppering Farm and Peppering Farm to Peppering High Barn.

At some stage overhead electric pylons were installed, crossing the field.



Figure 2: Burpham 1656 Estate Map (copyright Arundel Castle)



Figure 3: Burpham Tithe Map 1840



Figure 4: Yeakell and Gardner 1783 map



Figure 5: Extract from 1876 OS map scale 25" to Mile



Figure 6: Extract from 1879 OS Map scale 6" to Mile



Figure 7: Extract from 1961 OS Map scale 6" to mile

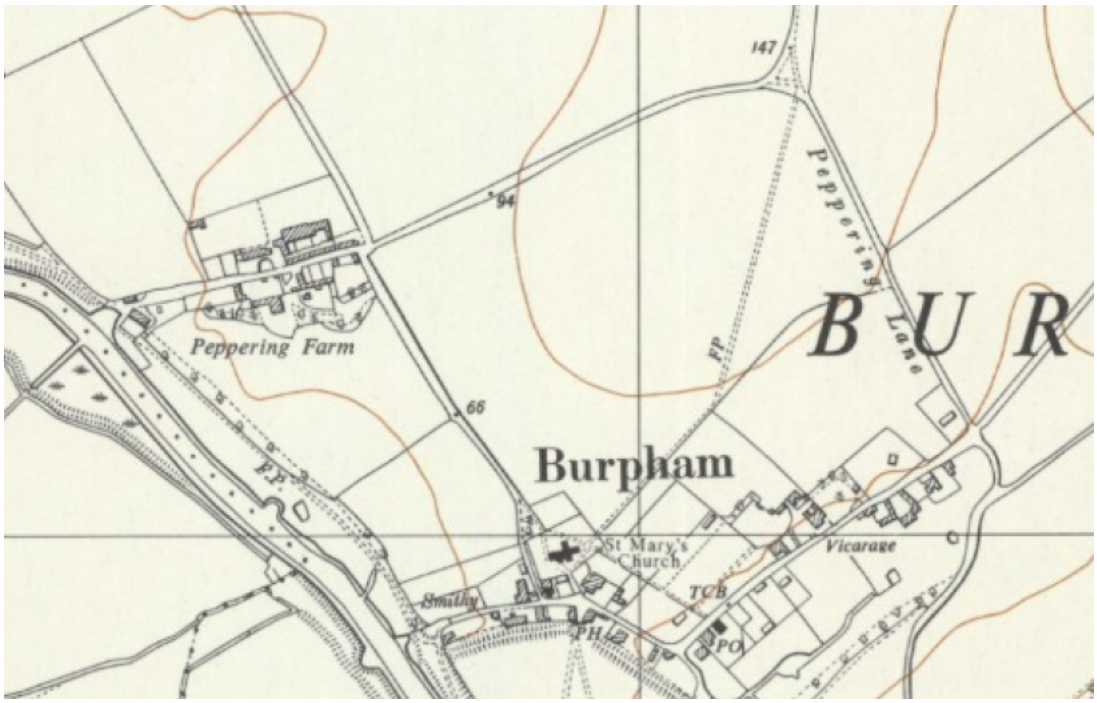


Figure 8: Extract from 1975 OS Map 6" to Mile

Archaeological Background

Aerial Photographs

Cropmarks of a ‘circular enclosure’ recorded from air photographs by RCHME 1992 - ‘Enclosure visible as a cropmark in a field to the east of Peppering Farm. There appears to be an entrance facing south-east, possibly with an internal,

corridor, entry way. Faint cropmarks visible to the west, and possibly the north, suggest that it may form part of a larger complex.'

LiDAR

The following LiDAR view of High Field does not show the possible enclosure (the location of which is shown by the dots.

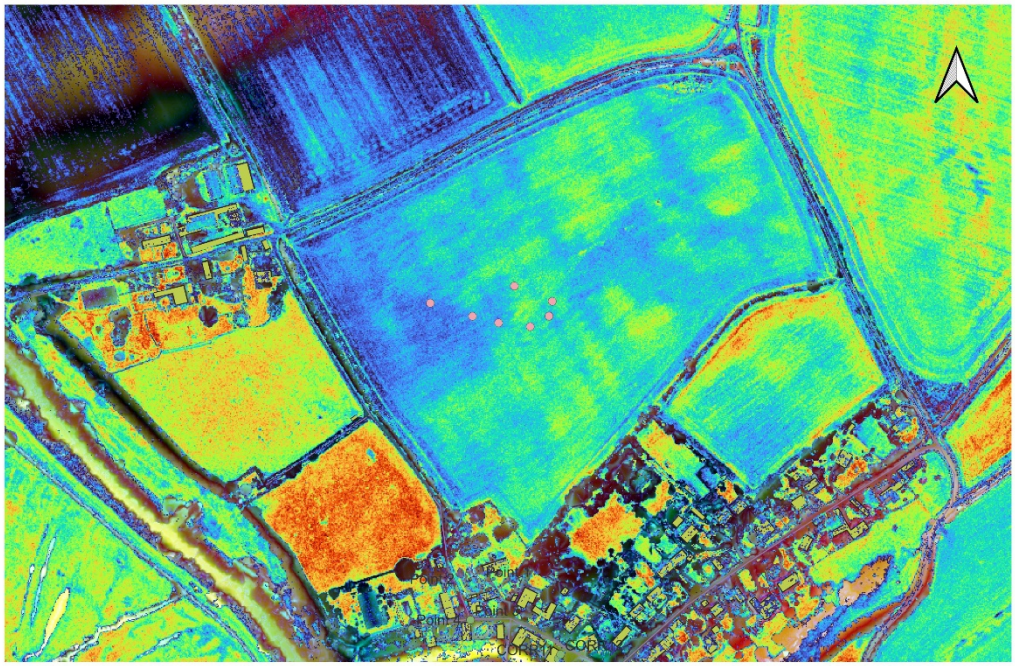


Figure 9: LiDAR view of High Field with location of possible enclosure

HER Records

Entries in a 1km radius of the site are shown in the section below. The key ones which may relate to the possible Iron Age-Roman enclosure are summarised here.

<Needs completing from Appendix>

Other Evidence

Information provided by Worthing Museum on artefacts found near or on the site:

a) There is anecdotal evidence that a larger gold stater hoard was looted from the field in the 1970s.

b) Sestertius of Hadrian found in 2019 nearby.

c) Silver stirrup ring, 14th century, found in 2019 nearer the church.

d) Neolithic flint axe found in the field to the north, February 2025 (along with a quantity of worked flint)

e) Anglo-Saxon silver stirrup mount found in the field to the north, February 2025.

f) Anglo-Saxon barrow cemetery to the immediate west. A 1820s 'excavation' mentions a warrior burial in 'tumuli' including a sword, two spearheads and a shield boss. No further information is available.

g) Bronze age 'cinerary urn' found within the above barrow cemetery.

h) Bronze age inhumation burial at Elmbank to the south-east.

Research Aims

Main Aims

The main aims of this project are to ascertain:

1. the archaeological nature and date of a multi-sided enclosure, which appears on an Aerial Photographs (see figure 10 below).

   The area enclosed is approximately 1440 sq. m/15490 sq. feet. There is a possible entrance in the SW corner of the enclosure.

   The accompanying ditch is 145m/475 feet ditch in length and approximately 2.5m wide (on average).

2. The archaeological nature and date of a possible trackway running west of the enclosure heading towards Peppering farm and/or the river Arun (see figure 10 below).

Second Aim

To investigate if there are any archaeological features contained within the enclosure. None appear on the Aerial Photographs but may appear as anomalies of the Geophysical survey.

Third Aim

There are other crop/soil marks in the field, including a hint of a much larger square enclosure which the above enclosure sits within. Investigation of this possible feature will be the third aim of the project. Any investigation will depend on results found and resource availability.



Figure** 10**: Field with Possible Enclosure and Trackway taken from Google Earth

Methodology

Geophysical Survey

The current plan is to undertake a magnetometry survey of the field in mid-August ahead of the excavation. The results from this survey combined with the Aerial Photographs will dictate the location and size of the evaluation trenches.

Geophysical Survey Results

The following are the results from the magnetometry survey undertaken on 8th August. The area surveyed was 120m x 160m.

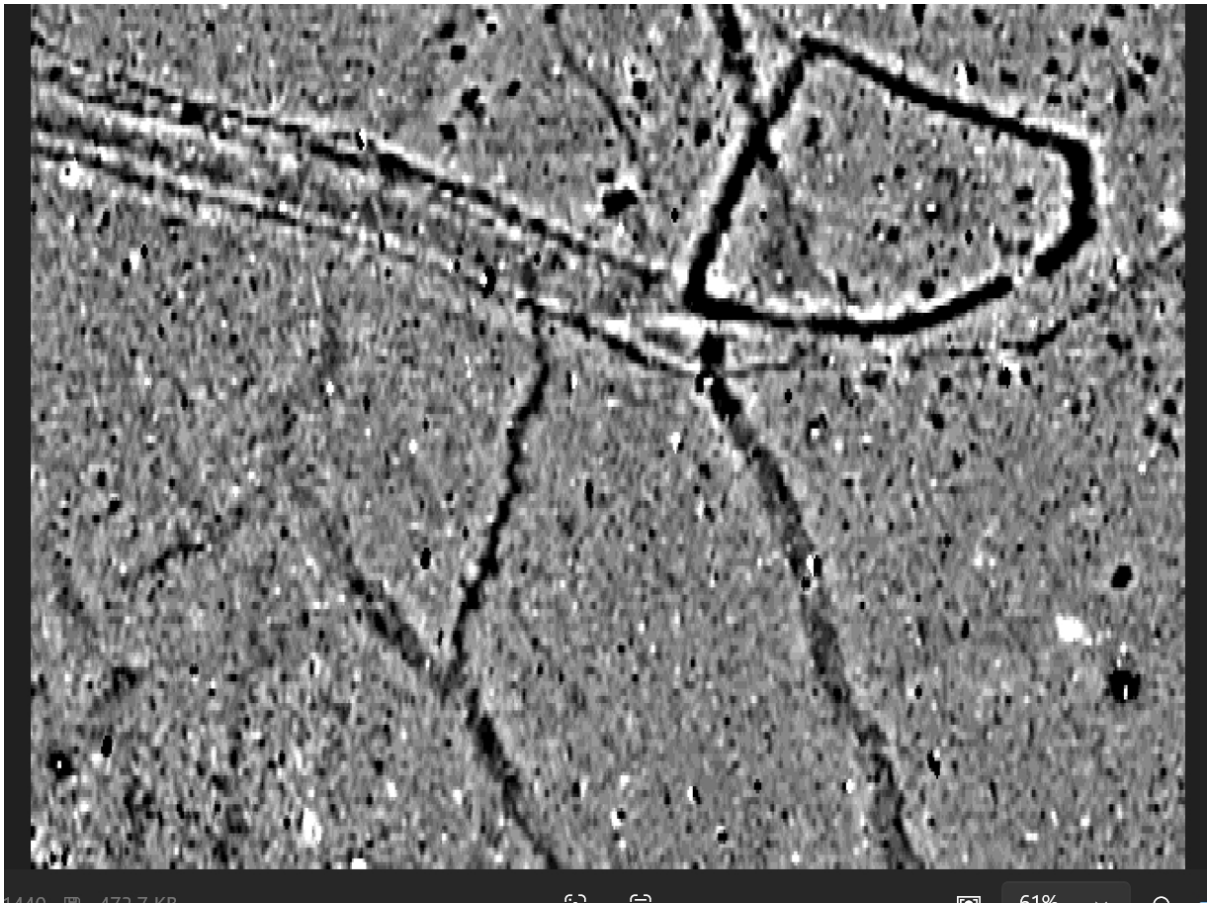


Figure** 11: **Geophysical Survey results

Evaluation Trenches

Primary Aim

The exact number and location of the evaluation trenches have yet to be determined. Note: this is still the case even with the geophysical survey results. Currently looking to see how many resources will be available to excavate.

Whilst the number of trenches (and their size) has yet to be established, their location remains as per the original intention i.e. focussing on the following:

- Trenches A and B over the possible trackway
- Trenches C, D and E over the possible enclosure.
- Trench F over the possible entrance.

Each trench will be opened and excavated by hand, with the intention being to backfill by machine.

Whilst the exact length of each trench is unknown, the intention is for the trenches to initially be 0.5m wide. Once features have been located the trenches will be widened (up to 2.0m if resources and time allow) and features sectioned.

The exception to this, is trench F, which will be set out as a rectangle or square (depending on geophysical results) and then fully excavated by context.

Second and Third Aim

Trenches to investigate these aims, will depend on the results from the Geophysical Survey and the level of archaeological finds from Trenches A to F.

Recording

Feature and Context numbers will be assigned from the central Feature and Context Registers.

Metal Detecting

There is verbal evidence to suggest that this field has been detected on back in the 1970s and that several Iron Age and Roman period coins found.

However, the intention is to detect the spoil heaps from each trench and time/resources permitting detect over the whole field.

All detected finds will be treated and processed as unstratified small finds. Exceptions will be made i.e. if it is evident that the find is modern (20th-21st century).

Site Records

Context and Feature Recording

Each context will be assigned a unique ID and WAS pro forma context sheets used to record them.

Each feature will be assigned a unique ID and WAS pro forma feature sheets used to record them.

Drawings

Section drawings will be recorded at 1:10 and if plan drawings prove feasible these will be recorded at 1:20.

Surveying

The site will be surveyed using the total station to record position and height information.

The Ordnance benchmark located against the parish church will be used.

The use and location of any Temporary Benchmarks (TBMs) will be determined by the surveying team and placed after the crop has been harvested.

Artefacts

Where artefacts are in context they will be recorded as set out in First Aid for Finds (Watkinson and Neal, 1998).

Small Finds Policy

The draft classification of Small (Individual) Finds for this excavation covers the following artefacts:

a) Coins.

b) All metal work.

c) Pottery with a visible maker's stamp.

d) Worked flint.

All other material will be classified as Bulk Finds.

Finds Retention

The current position is to retain all archaeologically significant objects (either man-made or natural). If necessary, a decision will be made on-site to retain a sample of a specific category of artefact and restore the remainder back into one of the trenches. This location will be recorded in the Site Diary.

Environmental Material

Currently, there are no plans to take soil samples. This approach will be reviewed on-site and may change depending on the nature of any features found.

Any bulk samples for charred plant and charcoal remains will be primarily restricted to dated or datable key contexts. Samples for land snails will only be taken though ditch sequences if they dated or datable, and the results of analysis will significantly enhance our aims.

Metal Detecting

It is intended to use metal detectors on the spoil heaps and trenches as excavation progresses.

If there are sufficient resources and time, then the area around the excavation site will also be detected.

Timescales and Duration of Work

The following are provisional dates for the excavation and are dependent on the removal of the crop in either late July or early August.

- Geophysical survey 8th to 9th August or 15th to 16th August.
- Site set up between 17th to 21st August.
- Excavation 22nd August to 31st August.
- Contingency, removal of equipment and reinstatement of site 1st to 6th September.

Land Ownership and Access

The field is owned by the Norfolk Estate, with the key points of contact being:

Nick Field (Tenant Farmer)

Conor Haydon (Farm Manager).

Access to the field is via the entrance on the NW corner of the field, with parking in the Peppering Farmyard, which is directly opposite the field entrance.

Restrictions

The buffer strips (6m to 12m) adjacent to the field boundaries are to be respected with no access, excavation or detecting on these strips.

Written Report

The intention is to produce a written excavation report within 24 months of completing the excavation.
The report will be distributed to the Landowner, Tenant Farmer and Farm Manager.
With the Landowner's permission details of the report will be circulated to the local community.
A summary of the excavation report will appear in the annual WAS Journal and if results are of sufficient interest state that the West Sussex HER will be updated.

WASFU resources will be responsible for producing the report and providing HER information.

Deposition of Archive and Finds

Archive

The current plan is to place the final archive with Worthing Museum.

The archive will consist of all the site records, drawings (sections and plans), photographs etc.

Finds

Following the excavation the retained finds will be held by WASFU pending a decision as to retention or disposal of artefacts.

Artefacts remain the property of the Norfolk Estate. These will be stored or re-deposited as appropriate with the permission of the landowner.

If acceptable the artefacts will form part of the archive and will be accessioned by Worthing Museum.

Finds Tent and Equipment Storage

The current intention is to set up the Finds Tent somewhere along the western boundary of the field, as close to the excavation site as possible.

Equipment will be stored either in the tent or in one of the barns of Peppering Farm.

No equipment of value or small finds will be left in the Finds Tent overnight.

Risk Assessment

Health and Safety Issues

Currently, there are no known Health and Safety issues specific to this excavation.

The presence of overhead electric pylons will probably mean that no drone pictures can be taken. This is to be confirmed.

In the event that emergency services are required the What Three Words reference for the site is **unlocking/hiked/anchovies**.

Standard Risk Assessment

A standard Risk Assessment will be undertaken prior to the excavation commencing. The assessment will focus on:

- Terrain and working conditions.
- Weather.
- Use of tools.

Given the proximity of the car parking facilities, it may not be necessary to have an vehicle on site for emergency purposes.

Services

There are no underground water or electrical services crossing the field.

Finance and Expenses

Worthing Archaeological Society will fund insurance for personnel and the provision of excavation equipment.

Where possible post excavation work will be undertaken by members of WASFU. The WAS Committee will decide whether to fund more detailed specialist interpretation of samples and artefacts.

Excavation Key Items

This section outlines those items required for the excavation which will require financial outlay by WAS.

Item	Likelihood	Note	Budget
Site Stationery – Registers and forms	High	Will need to check to see what forms are left over from 2025	£50-£80
Portaloo's	Med to High	Will use the facilities available in the yard.	£300-£450.
JCB for backfilling	High	Provisionally scheduled for second week in September.	£250-£300
Additional digging equipment	Low to Med	Need to see what is in stock and disposed of, since 2025	£100-£150

Insurance

WAS has archaeological site insurance and public liability insurance.

All participants must be fully paid-up members of WAS to be covered by WAS Insurance (but a day membership fee can be paid.) Anyone taking part who is not covered by WAS insurance must have suitable insurance from a partner organisation.

Participants must also complete a Health & Safety/Indemnity Form, which is valid for a year, and which details any health issues and an emergency contact. Since this information is confidential it will be held securely by the project director. The forms are on the WAS website: https://www.worthingarchaeological.org/.

A site attendance record will be used for participants to sign in and out each day. The WAS policy on personal data is available at: ***obtain most up to date link from WAS website.***

The depth of excavation is limited to **two metres** (although the site director and supervisors will review safety of trench walls and standing structures throughout the dig and halt further excavation before a depth of two metres if unsafe to continue).

Car Parking, Water and Toilets

a) Car Parking facilities will be available in the farmyard opposite the site (as per the 2025 excavation at Forge Field).

b) There will be a water source located in the farmyard.

c) There are toilet facilities available in the farmyard

Site Supervision

The Site Director for this excavation will be Keith Bolton

Survey Team will be led by

Finds Team will be led by

Site Supervisors will be

Appendix A Banjo Enclosures

Without wishing to jump the gun and reach conclusions without any archaeological evidence, the enclosure and associated trackway could be classified as a 'Banjo Enclosure'. Traditional literature states that there are three Banjo Enclosures in West Sussex (Carne's Seat, Denge Bottom and Selhurst Park).

The excavations undertaken at Carne's Seat in 1986 only involved four evaluation trenches, which focused on the ditches and a rampart (Holgate 1986).

However, the recent excavations at Selhurst Park (Anelay 2019) concluded that the enclosure was a small sub-rectangular farmstead dated to the Middle Iron Age, and not a banjo enclosure (Anelay 2019, 130-133).

Appendix B WSCC HER References

The following table summarises a subset of the West Sussex HER sites within 1.0 km radius of the site. The data was provided in January 2026.

WSCC HER No. (MWS)	Description	Period
2694	Saxon burial mound at Peppering Farm investigated in 1835 and found to contain an inhumation with iron sword and possible spearhead	Anglo-Saxon
2701	Type A beaker associated with a crouched adult male burial found in 1954 during excavation of cesspool in garden of Elmbank.	Early Bronze Age
2704	Palaeolithic axes found on ground surface in field, north of 'Green Garden.	Palaeolithic
2705	Gold coin of *Cunobelin* found whilst ploughing east of Peppering House.	Iron Age
2706	Moated area northwest of Great Peppering measuring c. 60yds square.	Medieval
2713		
2978		
2981	11th- to 12th-century amber glass vessel found in the bank of the river at Burpham and may be a near-eastern import	Medieval
2986	Location of former tide mill on the Boundary Brook (between Burpham and Wepham).	Medieval
3296	Possible Bronze Age urn from a barrow near Pepperings.	Bronze Age
3313	Terrace way known as Leper's way ascends out	? Medieval.

WSCC HER No. (MWS)	Description	Period
	of Peppering Bottom. Likely to relate to settlement at Lee Farm (possible medieval leper colony).	
3425	Neolithic axe found in the Burpham area	Neolithic
3607	Sestertius (coin) of Antoninus Pius (Roman Emperor AD138-161) found in Burpham.	Roman
3655	Dugout canoe found in 1862 when clearing a drainage dyke 25-30 yards west of a sluice through a retaining bank	Iron-Age to Roman
3790	Burpham Camp. Scheduled Monument WS 48.	Iron Age to Anglo-Saxon
4290	Earthwork building platform in a field at Wepham Green with flint walled structure with brick quoins and possible former hollow way in close association	Post-Medieval
4361		
5720		
6560	Cast Iron water pump close to Burpham village	Post-Medieval
7557		
8032	Malt House shown on 1875-5 OS 25" map west of Pepperings Farm.	Post-Medieval
8287	lead coffin found in 1950s when tractor wheel sank into grave whilst ploughing	Unknown
8288	Short stabbing sword found by Lepper's Lane in the 1930's.	Roman
9247	Logboat	

References

Anelay, G. 2019 *The Selhurst Park Project: Middle Barn, Selhurstpark Farm, Eartham, West Sussex 2005-2008.*

Holgate, R. 1986 'Excavations at the Late Prehistoric and Romano-British Enclosure Complex at Carne's Seat, Goodwood, West Sussex, 1984', *SAC* **124**, 35.50.

Russel, C. 2011 *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Burpham Camp, Burpham, West Sussex.* ASE report **2011185**.