

# SNA70137 Sullington Warren Excavation Project Design



Figure 1: Sullington Common (c) Google Maps

NT Event: ENA10918

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## Introduction

The purpose of the Project Design is to outline a proposed excavation to be undertaken at National Trust's (NT) Sullington Warren over a week in the period April to June 2024.

The aim of the excavation is to gain a better understanding of the linear features appearing on the area of the warren known as 'The Lawn or Green' (NT monument 121846) – hereafter referred to as The Lawn. These features have appeared as crop marks (Brown 2021) and as anomalies on a GPR survey (Lovell, 2023).

Initially two trenches will be excavated to determine the nature of the linear features shown in figure 2 below. The exact location of the trenches has yet to be finalised.

The excavation will be undertaken by a team consisting of Worthing Archaeological Society Field Unit (WASFU members) and National Trust volunteers.

## Site Location and Geology

Figure 2 below shows the outline of the Lawn together with the scheduled monuments. The excavations will focus on the lawn, showing the linear crop marks, which may indicate the past presence of buildings.

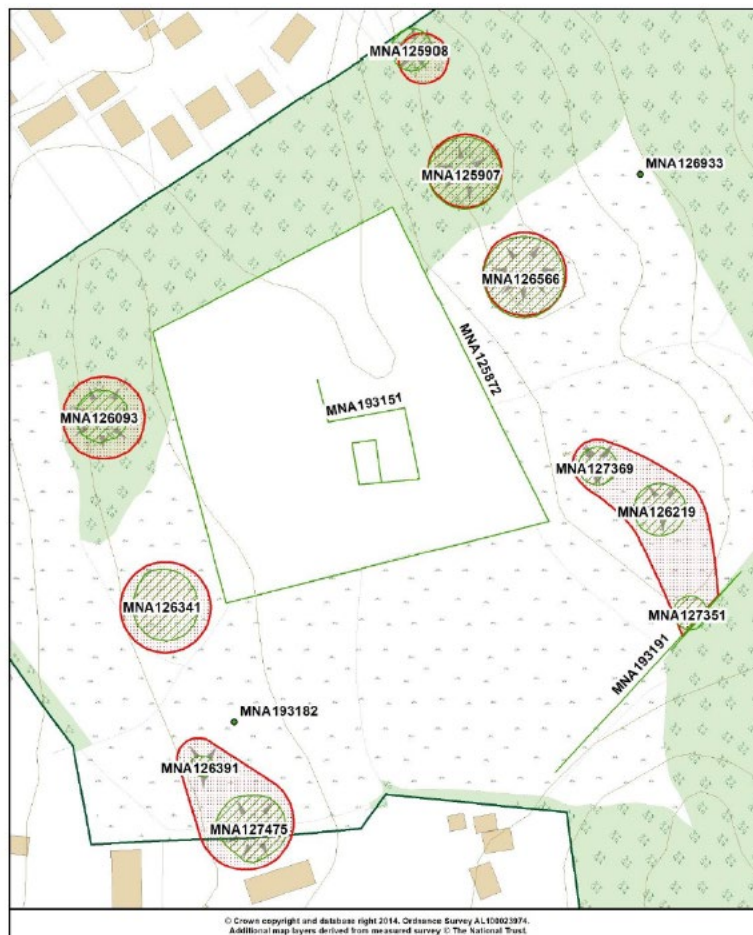


Figure 2: Sullington Warren, Scheduled Monuments (from Brown 2021)

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The Lawn is centred on TQ09571449. The site is located on the Lower Greensand ridges and consists of poor sandy acidic soils. The Lawn is primarily laid to grass (which is maintained by the National Trust), the surrounding area is covered in typical heathland vegetation i.e., bracken and heather.

## Historical and Archaeological Background

### Historical Background

Primarily based on Joy Ede's 1997 Archaeological and Land Use History Report (SNA69730).

Mesolithic activity is the earliest period represented on this property. Several pieces of flintwork dating from the Mesolithic have been found on paths.

There are at least ten early Bronze Age round barrows on two Lower Greensand ridges, running north south. There may also be other barrows on lower areas of the property although their identification is by no means positive. In this period and earlier in the Neolithic this area was probably cultivated. After about the Middle Bronze Age soils would have been so acidic and poor that cultivation was no longer feasible and the area was used to graze animals.

This grazing continued for many centuries preventing the regrowth of the woodland. Fire may also have helped keep this area open and dominated by ericaceous shrubs rather than grass.

In the 19th century a windmill was built on the hill in the southern part of the property. This was used throughout the century and fell into disuse in about 1907. In 1911 it was burnt down accidentally by a fire which swept across the whole property.

In the mid-19th century two enclosures were constructed by surrounding areas of land with a bank and ditch. One enclosure in the middle of the property on sloping ground was used until the First World War to cultivate crops such as oats. The other enclosure, if it was used for arable cultivation, did not last long. By 1875 it was shown on the Ordnance Survey map as rough pasture with scattered trees.

At some period in the past there was small scale quarrying, for sand and for gravel. This activity has left many small hollows, particularly in the southern half of the property. There are other hollows in the northeast of the property which are of unknown function and date.

### Archaeological Background

The Bronze Age Barrow cemetery was partly excavated in 1809 when cinerary urns and burnt human bones were found. We don't know which ones and I don't have any of the reports. Grinsell 1940 and Ede 1997 reference Cartright 1830

An Archaeology and Land Use Survey was undertaken by the National Trust in 1997 (SNA69730)

Sandgate Conservation society on various steps and paths up monuments on top of the Barrows in 1976 [MNA126566 | National Trust Heritage Records](#). This information is being extracted from their online archive of newsletters: <https://www.sandgate-conservation.org.uk/archive/>

- Serial: Sandgate Preservation Society. 1977. Sandgate Preservation Society Newsletter, 4. Spring 4. 4. pg. 6.

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- Serial: Sandgate Preservation Society. 1976. Sandgate Preservation Society Newsletter, 3. Autumn 3. 3. pg. 4.
- Serial: Sandgate Preservation Society. 1985. Sandgate Preservation Society Newsletter, 21. Autumn 21. 21. pg. 6.
- Serial: Sandgate Conservation Society. 1997. Sandgate Conservation Society Newsletter, 44. Spring 44. 44. pg. 3.

The scheduled barrows have been subject to a number condition surveys Dommett 2017 (SNA67508) and Brown 2021(SNA68878)

Since 2022 the University of Portsmouth have been using the site to train students in topographic surveys and UAV surveys. The results from these surveys are acting as point in time case work for the students whilst providing a monitor of change over time for the NT. In 2023 the students undertook a ground penetrating radar survey of the lawn area where the crop mark anomalies being investigated by this dig are located SNA69729. The report of this survey can be accessed on the National Trust HRO website<sup>1</sup>

## Research Aims

The research aims of this proposed excavations are:

To determine the nature of the features appearing as crop marks and anomalies in the recent GPR survey. Do they relate to a building or structure and are any associated finds to assist in the dating of the building? Determining these features will help enhance the knowledge of changing land use of Sullington Warren. The information will help inform future management of the site.

Provide an opportunity to upskill volunteers in archaeological techniques and engage with the local community. The site is well used by local community for recreation and exercise, but it is not known how well understood the site is. Engaging visitors in the site's history will hopefully widen understanding and help build a desire to value and protect the site.

## Methodology

The intention is open two trenches by machine (Figure 3). The trenches will be a minimum of 0.75m wide with the length depending on what features are uncovered and if necessary, will be extended sideways via hand.

Trench 1: 20m x 2m running roughly east-west along southern line of potential building

Trench 2: L shaped 5m along long edges (north & east) and 2.5m along shorter edges (south and west) located on north east corner of cropmark anomalies.

Excavation of top and subsoil will be undertaken by hand (and given the sandy nature of the soil) using spades and garden forks, with trowels used to clean any archaeological features.

Sieves will be used on the spoil heaps once features have been identified, so that any small artefacts can be recovered.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://nationaltrusthbsmr.esdm.co.uk/LLWS/LLFiles/228420/original\\_228420.pdf](https://nationaltrusthbsmr.esdm.co.uk/LLWS/LLFiles/228420/original_228420.pdf)

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The backfilling will be done by machine, with NT to reinstate the turf or reseed.

Currently there are no plans to undertake any further geophysical surveys.

### Site Records

Standard WAS processes will be followed for the excavation. This will include:

- Context Recording

Each context will be assigned a unique ID and WAS pro forma context 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. A set of temporary bench marks will be established prior to the excavation and will form the basis for the surveying of the trench and any small finds.

- Artefacts

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

For the purposes of this excavation, there are two “classes” of finds:

- Bulk Finds
- Small Finds.

Finds from disturbed contexts are regarded as Bulk Finds and should be placed in appropriate labelled finds trays, unless a significant find, e.g. a coin is suspected, when the Small Finds procedure below should be followed.

These are special finds, generally from undisturbed contexts but not always, and are 3-D recorded as they could be of importance as dating material. The categories are:

- Coins & Metal Objects
- Worked Bone Objects
- Worked Stone Objects
- Anything unusual or special

If you think you may have found one of the above where you are trowelling, leave the find in place and mark the find spot with the point of your trowel. Then notify a supervisor or the Site Director.

Once confirmed, you may be asked to lift the find and place it in a bag whilst keeping the find spot marked with your trowel. You will then be handed a label and nail to place in the find spot. Do not remove the label and nail until the find has been 3-D recorded.

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## Trench Location

The NT SMR photo below shows the proposed location of the two trenches.

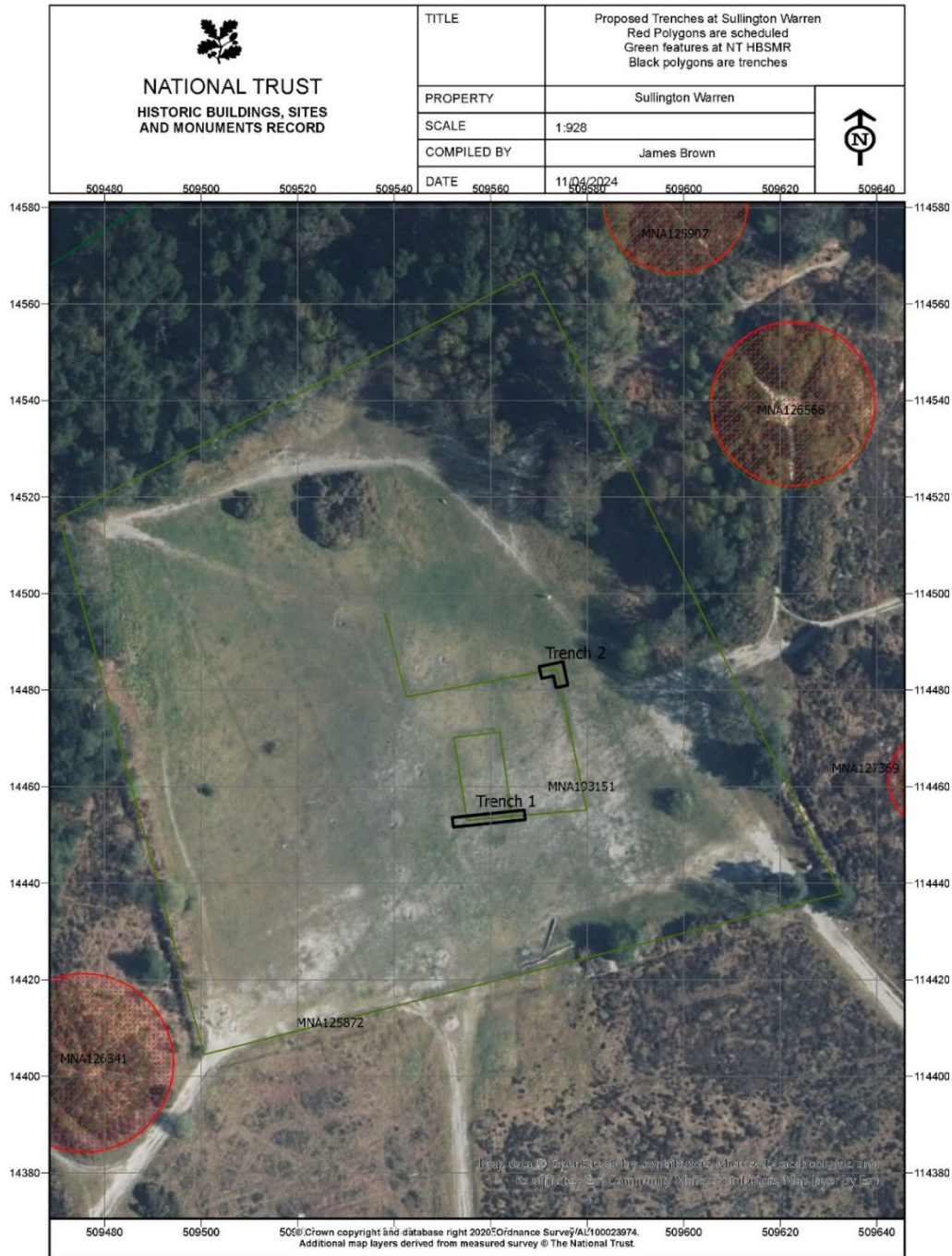


Figure 3 - Proposed trenches at Sullington Warren

The site code will be SW24 with the first trench assigned the id of A. Context numbering will start with 001. The second trench will be assigned the id of B, and will use the same Context Register as trench A.

The National Trust HBSMR event number for the excavation are ENA10918

## Metal Detecting

Metal detecting will be permitted by volunteers on the spoil heap and within the trenches. This has been agreed with the NT.

## Timescale and Duration of Work

The current plan is to undertake the excavations at the start of May for eight days, with the last two days earmarked for recording and 'striking camp'.

Trench opening will be Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April finishing on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May

The excavation will be undertaken by the WAS Field Unit with up to 10 volunteers with links to the National Trust:

## Land Ownership and Access

WAS Field Unit are undertaking this work because of an invitation by the landowners (National Trust).

Consent for the excavation has been supplied by Natural England (Consent document is available on request and a physical copy will be held on site)

Limited parking is available on-site. Permission to use the Trinity Church parking on Warren Chase from where volunteers can walk to site.

Up to 4 cars can be driven onto the Common and parked close to trenches for movement of equipment and to act as a small secure storage and welfare area.

## Written Report

WASFU will undertake the processing of finds with support from subject experts where applicable.

An excavation report will be produced by WASFU Director in conjunction with James Brown (NT Archaeologist). This report will be sent to the NT and appear on the WAS website.

The report will be allocated the NT HBSMR source number of SNA70138

## Deposition of Archive and Finds

All finds and site records will be stored at the WASFU facility at the NT Regional Office at Slindon, West Sussex.

As any finds belong to the National Trust, these will be retained until instructed otherwise by the National Trust (as per current WAS Finds Policy).

## Specific Health and Safety Issues

Further to a site visit undertaken in November 2023, there does not appear to be any specific H&S issues relating to this site. However, the Lawn is used by a number of dog walkers, therefore it will be necessary to ensure that the site (especially the trenches) are securely fenced off.

National Trust will provide Heras fencing as required.



## Finds Tent and Equipment Storage

Due to the level of public access to the site, it is recommended that the Finds Tent is not used and instead the gazebos are used to provide shelter.

There are no secure storage facilities available for equipment and finds. Therefore, these will need to be removed from the site at the end of each day.

National Trust owned George's Barn and Yard will be used for the overnight secure storage of equipment during the excavation.

## Risk Assessment

A risk assessment form will be completed and added as an appendix to the final version of the Project Design.

## Finance & Expenses

Post excavation work will be undertaken by Worthing Archaeological Society volunteers and the committee will decide whether to fund more detailed specialist interpretation of samples and artefacts.

The National Trust will provide the machinery to open and backfill the trench.

## 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.

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 the WAS website [www.worthingarchaeological.org](http://www.worthingarchaeological.org) under Documents > Policy.

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). However, it is unlikely that the trench will need to be this deep.

## Availability of Water and Toilets

Due to the site's location, there is no access to water, therefore all water will need to be brought to site for finds processing or drinking.

The National Trust will provide on-site toilet facilities.

## Site Supervision

The excavation will be directed by the WAS Field Unit Director, assisted by site supervisors.

## References

**Brown, J.** 2021 *Sullington Warren, West Sussex: Scheduled Monument Assessment*.

**Ede, J.** 1997 *Sullington Warren, West Sussex, An Archaeological and Land Use History Report*.

**Ede, J.** 1997 *Sullington Warren, West Sussex, Archaeological Sites and Monuments Inventory Listing*.

## Further Reading

**Drewett, P.** 1976 'The excavation of four round barrows at West Heath, Harting, 1973-75', *SAC* **114**, 126-150.

**Gould, D.** 2017 'The Distribution of Rabbit Warrens in Medieval England: An East-West Divide?', *Landscape History* **38**, 25-41.