

**Picket Mire, New Forest
Bank removal for HLS stream restoration
Archaeological Watching Brief Statement**



Prepared by the New Forest National Park Authority on behalf of the Verderers of
the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

September 2025

Summary:

On 15 July 2025, the New Forest National Park Authority's Archaeology Team undertook archaeological monitoring of the bank removal and ditch infill at Picket Mire, Picket Post in the New Forest, located at NGR 419070, 106348 (Fig. 1). These groundworks were carried out as part of stream restoration works for the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship scheme. No artefacts of archaeological significance were encountered during the works.

The site:

The Semi-rectangular (approx. 90x60m) Post Medieval banked enclosure, aligned NNE-SSW on its long axis, is located 170m North of Picket Post (service station) on the A31 NGR 419070, 106348 (Fig. 1). The enclosure reduces in width at its northern end and is formed by a bank (up to +1m high by +1m wide) with outer ditch still extant in places, enclosing approx. 0.5 hectares. The bank and ditch at the northern end are damaged and less visible and there are possible traces of some internal features.

Prior to the ground works Wessex Archaeology was commissioned to conduct a measured survey (Fig. 3) and historical research of the enclosure. The findings showed that this was a domestic enclosure, encroachment onto Crown Lands, constructed in the late 18th century, around the 1770s, by Joseph Agust and his son John, (Wessex 2025). The enclosure was first mapped on the Drivers Map c.1785 and then on subsequent OS 1st - 3rd Edition maps.

Pre-ground works:

The groundworks were carried out as part of stream restoration works for the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship scheme. The proposed works involve the removal of the surviving remains of the northern enclosure bank and ditch via mechanical excavation and removal of bank material, grading and levelling.

Prior to work commencing a bespoke Heritage Impact Assessment was undertaken, (NFNPA March 2025). The proposed works would result in the total loss of this section of the enclosure, Fig. 2, the following recommendations were made:

- A metric survey - The enclosure is surveyed to capture a full record of the extant earthwork features forming the enclosure, along with any internal features.
- Historic Research – A small amount of historical research is conducted with the aim of establishing a start and end date for the enclosure along with any other details that can be gained.
- A report illustrating the results of the survey and the finding of research conducted.
- A digital delivery of the survey data, in an appropriate format (to be agreed).
- Reason:

- Preservation by record of the area of proposed total loss of part of this feature (the enclosure).
- The production of an illustrated and informative report of the site to capture the full enclosure to facilitate future research and understanding of the site.

The findings of the survey and research were issued in June 2025.

Following the metric survey and historical research it was determined that all groundwork should be monitored by a qualified archaeologist to record any archaeological features or artefacts encountered.

Results:

The groundworks consisted of the removal of a section of the northern enclosure bank and the infill of the associated ditch using an excavator, resulting in the total loss of this section of the enclosure.

All groundworks were monitored by the NFNPA Archaeology Team. Site photo and working photographs can be seen in photos 1-7.

No artefacts of archaeological significance were encountered during the works.

Associated reports:

NPNPA, March 2025. Picket Mire 24-25 - Banked Enclosure - HLS Archaeological Constraints Evaluation

Wessex Archaeology, June 2025. Enclosure at Picket Mire, New Forest, Hampshire Topographic Survey Report.

NPNPA, July 2025. Picket Mire 25-26 - Banked Enclosure - HLS Archaeological Constraints Evaluation

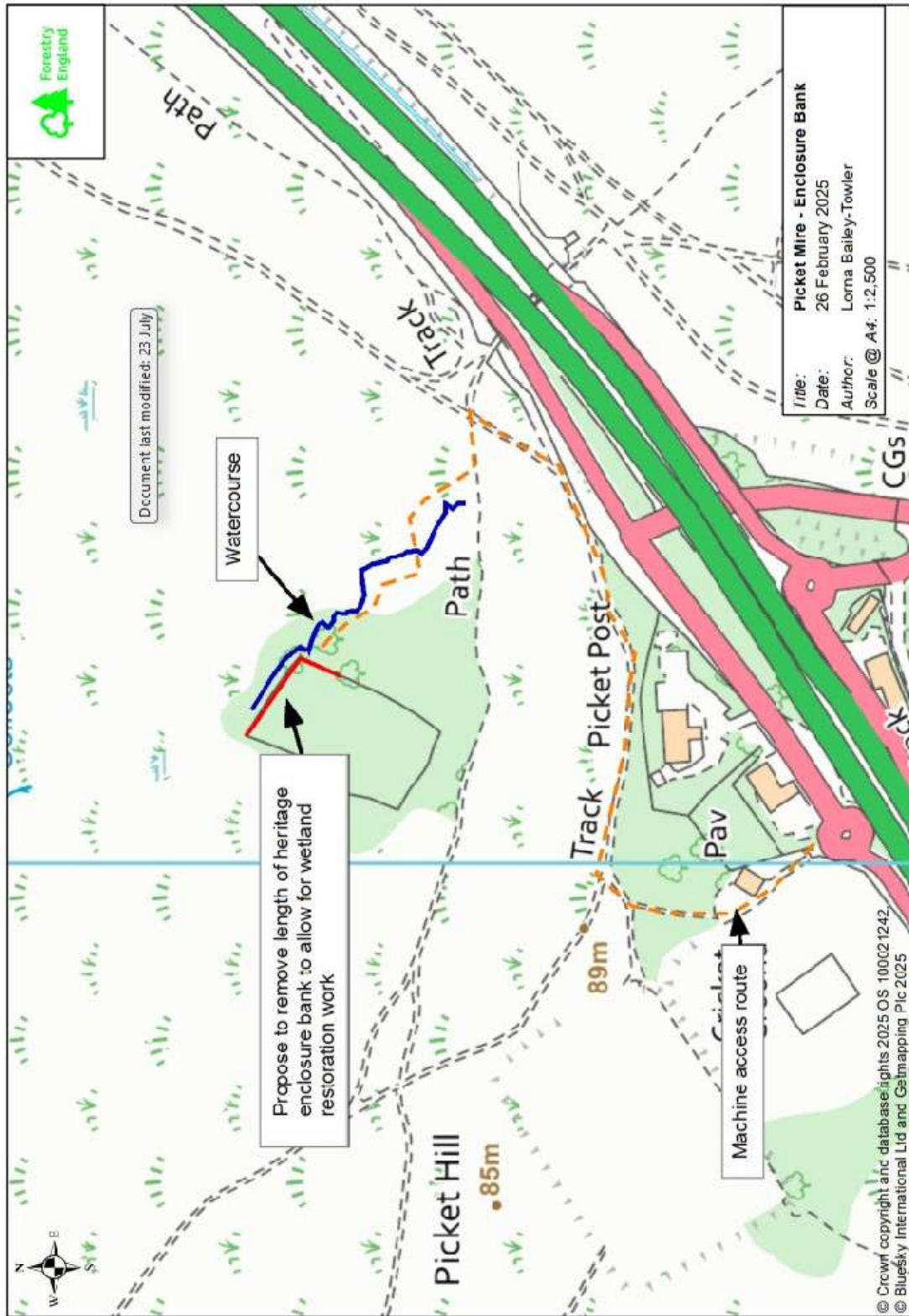


Figure 1: Site location map, with the original proposed section in red. This area was much reduced.
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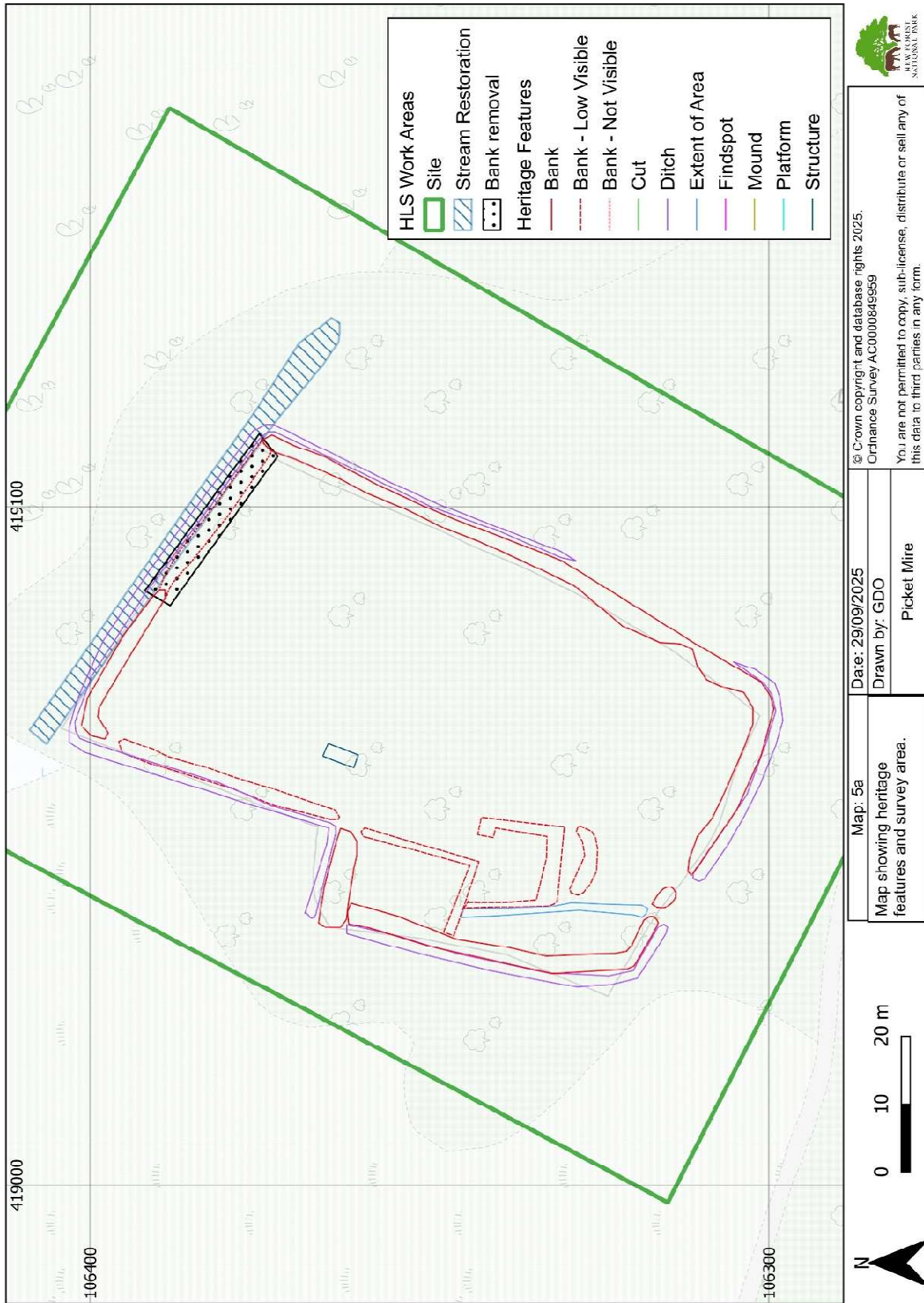


Figure 2: Map showing HLS works area and section of enclosure bank and ditch removed.

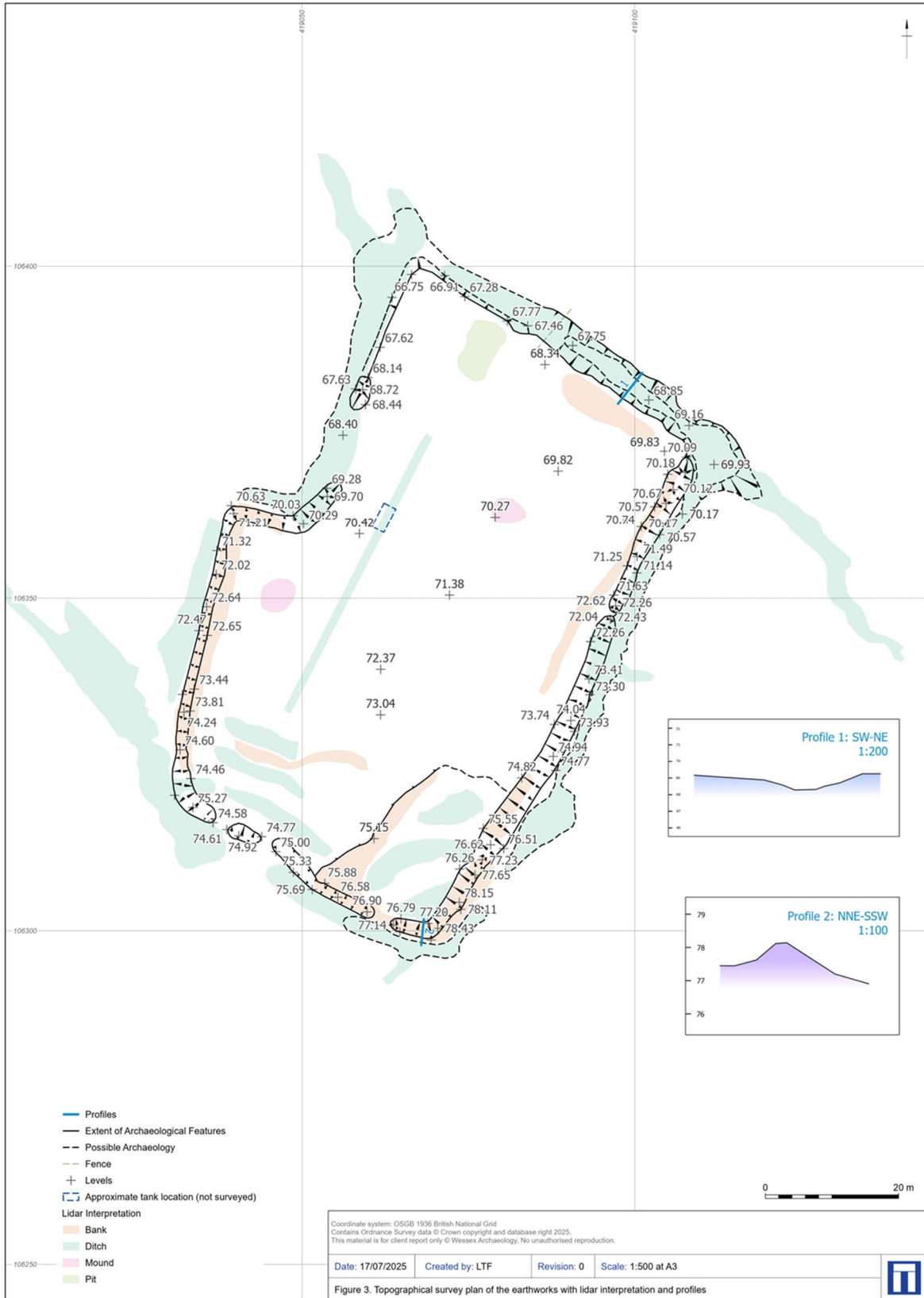


Figure 3: Measured survey results. Wessex Archaeology, June 2025.

Site Photographs



Photo 1: Northern enclosure boundary, looking ESE. March 2025.



Photo 2: Ground preparation prior to machine excavation (looking SW).



Photo 3: Machine excavation of the enclosure bank (looking S).



Photo 4: Working photograph of gravel deposition (looking S).



Photo 5: Working photograph of turf reinstatement (looking SE).



Photo 6: Working photograph of the final surface (looking S).



Photo 7: Working photograph of the final surface (looking W).

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