

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING
IN ASSOCIATION WITH REFURBISHMENT OF THE
COMMONDALE TO CASTLETON ELECTRICITY SUPPLY,
DANBY LOW MOOR, NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK**

**Archaeological Monitoring in Association with Refurbishment of the
Comondale to Castleton Electricity Supply, Danby Low Moor,
North York Moors National Park**

Central National Grid Reference: NZ 6649/1063 – 6849/0853

Site Code: GUC 06

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June 2007**

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1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 A programme of archaeological monitoring was undertaken in association with the refurbishment of an existing overhead electricity supply between Commondale and Castleton, Danby Low Moor, North Yorkshire. The total length of the supply route is c. 3km, running between Sand Hill on the edge of Commondale at National Grid Reference NZ 6649 1063 and land adjacent to Castleton Moor railway station at NGR NZ 6849 0853.
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by NEDL and undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited November-December 2006.
- 1.3 The work was undertaken following a recommendation by the North York Moors National Park Authority Archaeologist because of the archaeological potential of the supply route. Numerous sites of importance are known in the area, particularly within the central portion of the supply route, where it runs along the eastern valley side of Commondale Beck.
- 1.4 For the most part, the sites along the supply route are of known or suspected prehistoric origin and include three sites which have Scheduled Ancient Monument status, namely buried and earthwork remains of two burial mounds on the hillside below Three Howes Rigg and a small defended enclosure on the hillside above Box Hall. At the south-eastern end of the route is the site of a dismantled mineral tramway of post-medieval industrial origin, which is also of archaeological importance.
- 1.5 The aim of the archaeological project was to mitigate the impact of the refurbishment programme, particularly vehicular movements undertaken during groundworks, on the known archaeological resource along the supply route. The work involved a preliminary site visit, full route walk-over to identify archaeological sites, demarcation of identified sites and intermittent monitoring to ensure that archaeological monuments were not being impacted upon by the scheme.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 General Background

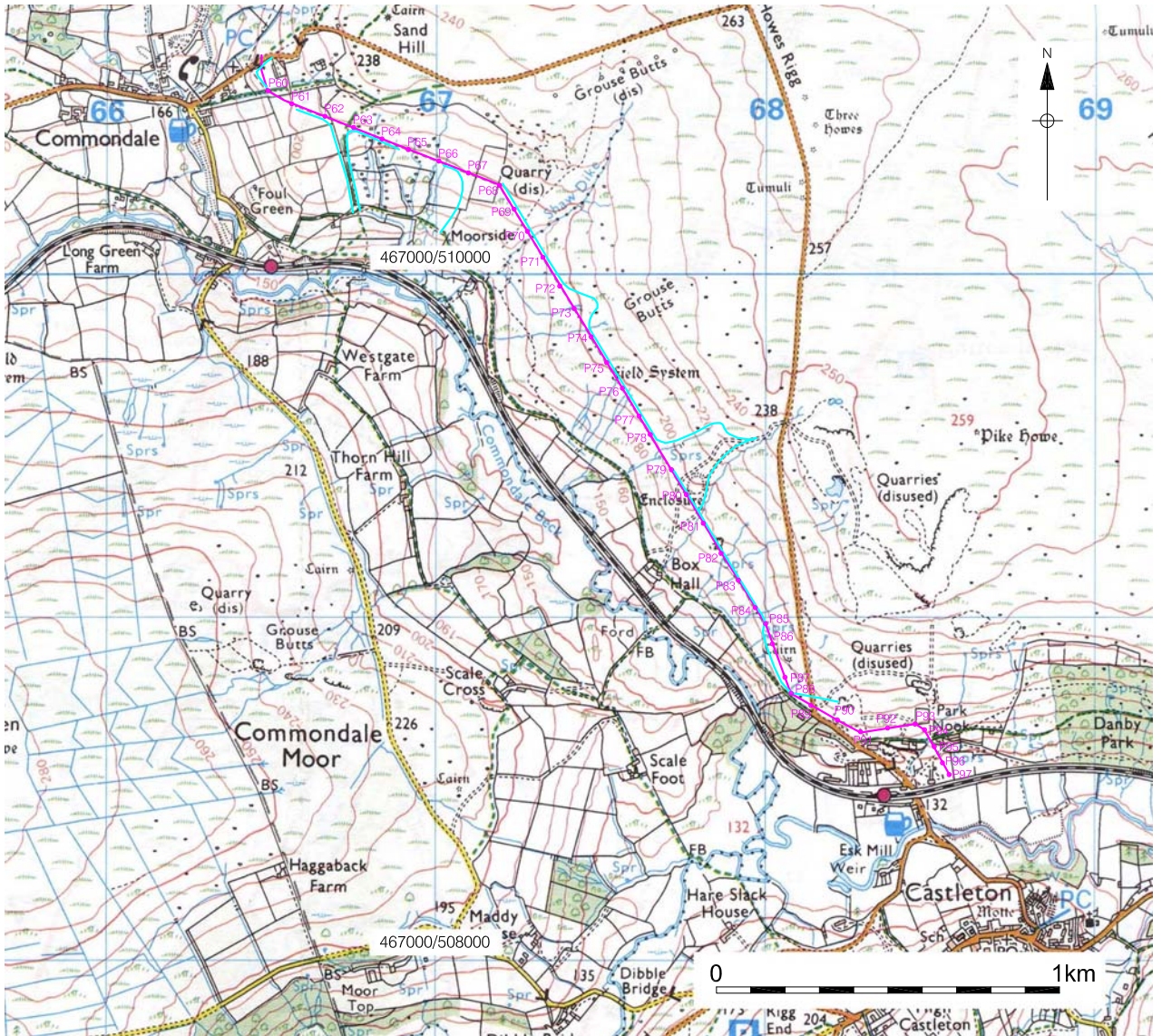
- 2.1.1 This report describes the working methods and results of a programme of archaeological monitoring undertaken along the c. 3km route of an overhead electricity supply between Commondale and Castleton in the North York Moors National Park (Figure 1).
- 2.1.2 The archaeological work included a full route walk-over to identify archaeological sites of significance, followed by demarcation of those sites, with subsequent monitoring of vehicular access routes and other activity associated with refurbishment of existing arrangements to carry the electricity supply.
- 2.1.3 The archaeological project was undertaken as a planning requirement, on the recommendation of the North York Moors National Park Authority Archaeologist. The work was commissioned by NEDL, with fieldwork being undertaken intermittently between 24 November and 19 December 2006 by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA).
- 2.1.4 This report is intended to comprise the project archive, a copy of which will be submitted to the North York Moors National Park Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). The Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) reference number for the project is: preconst1-26758.

2.2 Site Location and Description

- 2.2.1 The site comprises an overhead electricity supply route crossing Danby Low Moor above Commondale Beck in the North York Moors National Park. On the ground, the route is defined by a series of poles, numbered north to south as Pole 60 to Pole 97. The route begins at Sand Hill, c. 0.3km east of the village of Commondale, at NZ 6649 1063 (Pole 60), running for 3.13km in a general south-easterly direction, before terminating on land immediately east of Castleton railway station, c. 0.5km north of the village of Castleton at NZ 6849 0853.
- 2.2.2 The majority of the supply route runs across Danby Low Moor on the eastern valley side of Commondale Beck, the ground being heavily vegetated with heather and bracken.

2.3 Geology and Topography

- 2.3.1 Commondale Beck is one of a series of tributaries that feed the River Esk on its course from the North York Moors to Whitby. This tributary lies to the north of the Esk, draining a strip of lower moorland running directly east towards Whitby. The supply route runs along the eastern valley side as it rises onto Danby Low Moor, for the most part running close to the 190m contour.
- 2.3.2 The underlying geology of the area is of Jurassic Age. There are two major rock types in the area, the older being the dark grey clay or mud based sedimentary shales called the Lias and the younger formation being the mid-Jurassic Ravenscar Group, comprising alternating layers of shale, sandstone and limestone, this being the formation that produces the characteristic moorland scenery through which the supply route runs.



- P78 P79 New supply route (P78=Pole 78, etc.)
- Vehicle access routes

Figure 1. Site location
Scale 1:20,000

- 2.3.3 There has been significant glacial activity in the area, and deposits from such activity, including glacial till, are known to extend up a number of the lower-lying tributary valleys. Drift material tends to be absent from the upland areas and the Jurassic rocks are exposed.

2.4 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 2.4.1 The site is located in an area of high archaeological potential, particularly for remains of the prehistoric period. The main archaeological sites in the vicinity are summarised below, moving from north to south along the route, and discussed in relation to the poles (Pole 75, *etc.*) carrying the overhead electricity supply. SMR entries within the densest area of archaeological activity, between Poles 75 and 80 on the supply route, are shown on Figure 2, with additional detail shown on Figure 3.
- 2.4.2 Poles 66-67 straddle the recorded remains of a presumed ancient cairn field above Moorside.
- 2.4.3 Pole 68 lies close to a current dry stone wall field boundary, that is paralleled on the western side by the remains of an earlier walled boundary.
- 2.4.4 Poles 75-80 lie within a particularly sensitive and complex archaeological landscape comprising a wide range of prehistoric funerary, settlement and field system remains. These remains include two scheduled sites, located 590m and 570m north-west of Box Hall, SAMs 32617 and 32618, respectively. These comprise buried and earthwork remains of small burial mounds - round barrows - sited on the south-west facing hillside below Three Howes Rigg. These lie within an area of dispersed field system remains extending across the hillside, mostly to the south-east. Both mounds are c. 7m in diameter, with earthwork remains surviving up to c. 0.50m in height. Both features are thought to be bowl barrows, the most numerous form of round barrow, being funerary monuments dating from the Late Neolithic period to the Late Bronze Age.
- 2.4.5 Pole 80 lies close to another scheduled site, the prehistoric settlement of Box Hall, SAM 32616. This includes the buried and earthwork remains of an enclosure sited on the south-west facing hillside above Box Hall. Scattered across the hillside to the north-west and south-east are fragmentary remains of probably associated field system, although these are not included in the scheduling. The enclosure occupies slightly sloping ground and is formed by a bank and ditch describing a sub-rectangular area c. 50m across. The ditch is typically c. 3m wide and up to c. 0.30m deep, with an internal bank surviving to height of c. 0.5m. On all but the northern side, the ditch also has a slight external bank up to c. 4m wide. The interior has a number of irregularities, one of which was excavated in 1959. This was a rock cut pit more than 2m wide and 0.70m deep containing burnt stones and charcoal. The ditch was also trenched in the same year and yielded the base of a pot dating to the Late Bronze Age. North of the enclosure is a stone cairn c. 7m in diameter and c. 0.60m high, which is included in the scheduling. It is probably a stone clearance cairn.
- 2.4.6 Pole 86 lies close to a prehistoric funerary cairn above Scar Wood.
- 2.4.7 Pole 95 lies close to the remains of dismantled mineral tramway in the portion of Castleton which lies on the north side of the River Esk, well beyond the medieval core of the village.

2.5 Planning Background

- 2.5.1 The archaeological project was undertaken as a planning requirement associated with the refurbishment of the Commondale to Castleton overhead electricity supply. The supply route lies in an area of archaeological potential, as outlined above.
- 2.5.2 At a national level, the need for early consultation in the planning process in order to determine the impact of development schemes upon the archaeological resource is identified in the document '*Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*'¹ (PPG16). This document emphasises that:
- Archaeological remains are a finite resource.
 - Where nationally important archaeological remains (whether scheduled or unscheduled) and their settings are affected by development proposals, there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation.
 - Local Plan policies are an important way in which to preserve sites and features for future generations.
- 2.5.3 In this instance, local planning guidance regarding archaeology is set out in the '*North York Moors Local Plan*'² This lists a set of objectives, taken from the '*National Park Management Plan*'³ and sets out three policies relating to archaeological sites, all of which follow the principles set out in PPG16. These policies are:
- *AR1 - Sites of National Archaeological Importance.*
 - *AR2 - Other Sites of Archaeological Importance.*
 - *AR3 - Evaluation of Sites.*
- 2.5.4 In response to the planning application for the supply route refurbishment, the National Park Authority Archaeologist made recommendations in relation to each of the known archaeological sites along the route, namely:
- Pole 66-67 – archaeological remains in the presumed ancient cairn field in the vicinity of these poles should be located to ensure that all site operations and vehicular activities carefully respect them.
 - Pole 68 – the earlier walled boundary lying adjacent to the existing drystone wall boundary in the vicinity of this pole should not be disturbed by site operations and vehicular activities.
 - Poles 75-80 – although no detailed survey exists of the important archaeological remains in this part of the supply route, appropriate mitigation prior to the scheme should include an area survey to ensure that all site operations and vehicular activities carefully respect the remains.

¹ Department of the Environment 1990.

² North York Moors National Park Authority 2003.

³ North York Moors National Park Authority 1998.

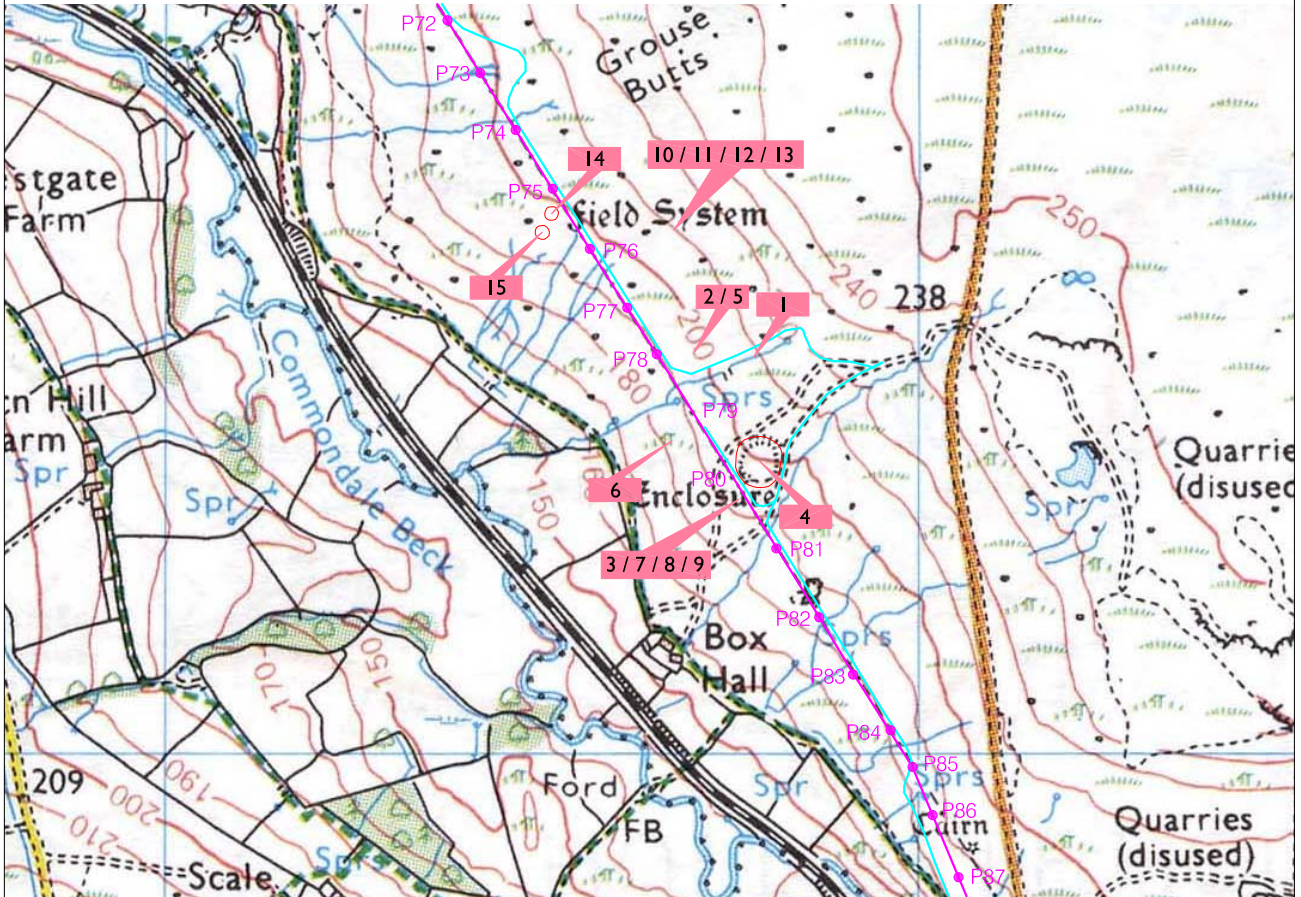
- Pole 86 – the prehistoric funerary cairn in the vicinity of this pole should be carefully respected by all site operations and vehicular activities.
- Pole 95 – the dismantled mineral tramway in the vicinity of this pole should be carefully respected by all site operations and vehicular activities.

2.5.5 No formal Brief or Specification for the required archaeological work was compiled ahead of the work. However, the requirements of the National Park Authority Archaeologist were discussed in detail with PCA prior to the work commencing.

2.6 Aims and Objectives

2.6.1 The aim of the archaeological project was to identify and mark all earthworks relating to known or suspected archaeological sites along the supply route in order to prevent damage by site operations, including vehicular movements, associated with refurbishment of existing arrangements to carry the electricity supply.

2.6.2 Through intermittent monitoring of the refurbishment scheme, the objective was then to ensure that site operatives respected the identified and demarcated archaeological sites.



Ref.	SMR No.	Grid Reference	Description	Period
1	818.00000	467750/509520	Cairn field	Prehistoric multi-period
2	818.01000	467670/509530	Hut circles & sub-rectangular enclosure	?Bronze Age
3	818.02000	467730/509340	Clearance cairns, walls & lynchets	?Bronze Age
4	818.01100	467800/509400	SAM 32616: Enclosure	?Bronze Age
5	818.01200	467670/509530	Hut circles	?Late Bronze Age - Early Iron Age
6	818.01300	467765/509421	Pits	?Bronze Age
7	818.02001	467730/509340	Cluster of clearance cairns	?Bronze Age
8	818.02002	467730/509340	Walled field	?Bronze Age
9	818.02003	467730/509340	Lynchets	?Bronze Age
10	818.03000	467650/509700	Walled field system	?Bronze Age
11	818.03001	467650/509700	Cluster of clearance cairns	?Bronze Age
12	818.03002	467650/509700	Walled field system	?Bronze Age
13	818.03003	467650/509700	Lynchets	?Bronze Age
14	818.04000	467520/509710	SAM 32617: Small round barrow	?Bronze Age
15	818.05000	467510/509690	SAM 32618: Small round barrow	?Bronze Age

Figure 2. SMR entries, between Poles 75 and 81
Scale 1:20,000

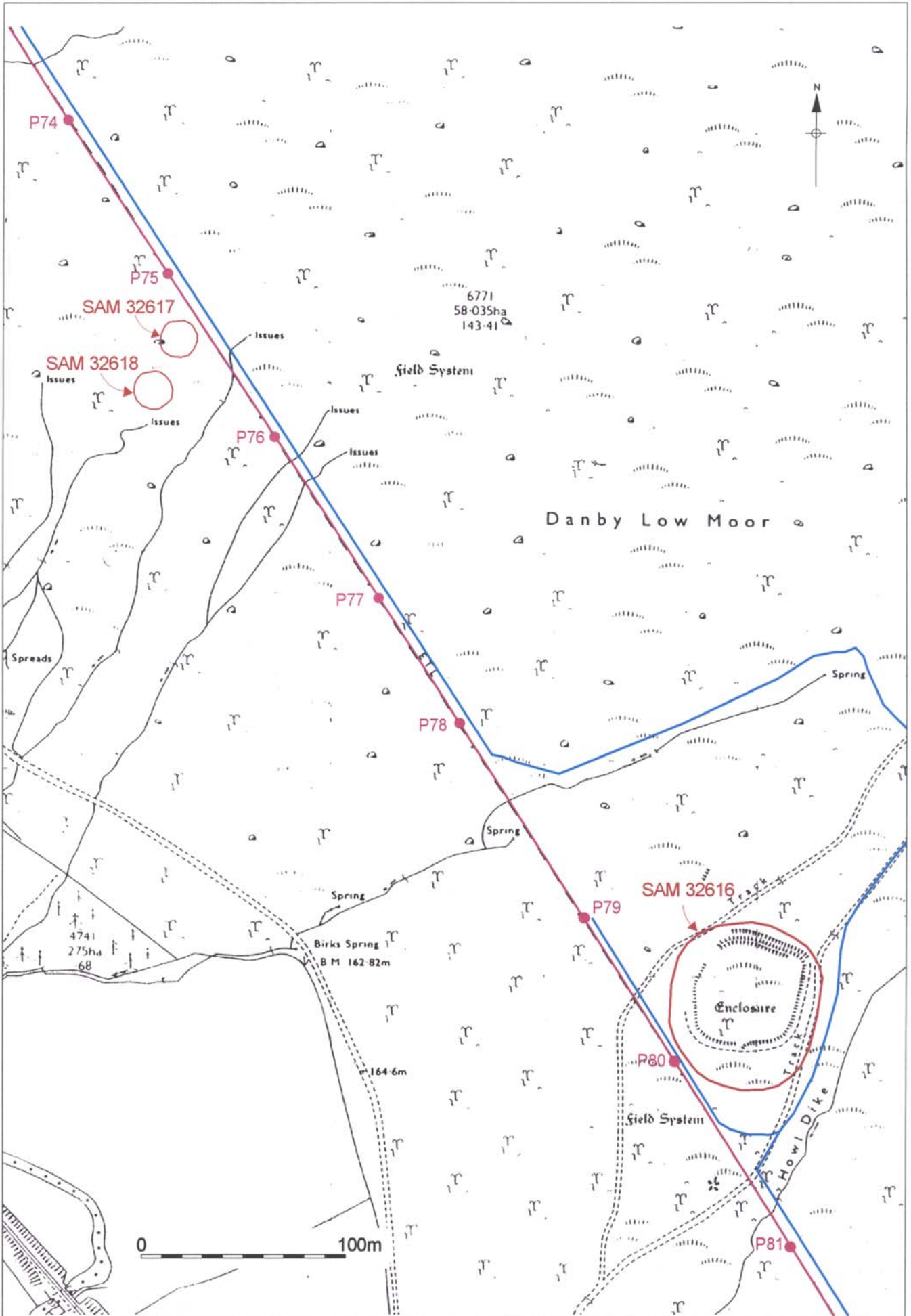


Figure 3. Detail of route, between Poles 75 and 81
Scale 1:2,500

3. FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The programme of archaeological monitoring undertaken in association with refurbishment of the Comondale to Castleton overhead electricity supply was undertaken on the recommendation of the North York Moors National Park Authority Archaeologist. The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the relevant standard and guidance document of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA).⁴ PCA is an IFA-Registered Organisation (RAO 23).
- 3.1.2 Although no formal Brief or Specification for the work was compiled, discussions were held with the National Park Authority Archaeologist regarding recommendations made to the National Park Authority for the planning condition. Documentation relating to archaeological sites, including details of scheduling and a selection of SMR entries, along the route was supplied to PCA by the National Park Authority Archaeologist.
- 3.1.3 Initial liaison with personnel from Alfred McAlpine, the main contractor for the supply refurbishment scheme, established that there would be three distinct forms of intervention along the route:
- Basic refurbishment of existing poles requiring vehicular (four-wheel drive) access to poles.
 - Addition of stays to existing poles requiring tracked mechanical excavator access to excavate housings for the stays.
 - Replacement of existing poles/installation of new poles requiring tracked mechanical excavator access to excavate housings for new poles.
- 3.1.4 In general, groundworks crews were to use designated access routes only, for the most part existing moorland routes established by gamekeepers. The crews were to be made fully aware of the restricted areas and informed why the restrictions were in place. Tracked 360° mechanical excavators were to be utilised for invasive groundworks along the supply route in order to minimise ground disturbance through wheel rutting on the moorland. Four-wheel drive vehicles were to be used, wherever possible, only on designated access routes, although during the scheme usage of such vehicles on the moorland was discontinued entirely in order to minimise wheel rutting. Off the moorland, where wheel rutting was a particular problem, most notably at roadside entry points and at other locations where the ground was already rutted, tracked machines were also used, wherever possible, to reduce impact.
- 3.1.5 The initial elements of the archaeological monitoring programme comprised representatives of PCA and Alfred McAlpine undertaking a preliminary site visit and then a full route walk-over in order to identify, and then demarcate, archaeological monuments. The aim was to make groundwork crews aware of the monuments so that they could successfully avoid them, particularly with vehicular movements. Demarcation of identified sites was undertaken using hi-visibility flags for SAMs and barrier tape affixed to wooden stakes for other monuments.

⁴ IFA 2001.

3.1.6 The programme of archaeological fieldwork comprised:

- 24 November 2006 - preliminary site visit for familiarisation with the main monuments and assessment of potential for detailed field survey in the area of the three SAMs.
- 1 December 2006 – complete route walk-over and initial discussion of vehicular access arrangements with the Wayleaves Officer from Alfred McAlpine.
- 5 December 2006 – demarcation of identified sites with the Wayleaves Officer from Alfred McAlpine.
- 8 December 2006 – monitoring of existing arrangements between Poles 67 and 80 to update the assessment of threat to known sites.
- 12 December 2006 - monitoring of existing arrangements between Poles 67 and 80 to update the assessment of threat to known sites.
- 14 December 2006 – monitoring of existing arrangements between Poles 73 and 86 to update the assessment of threat to known sites.
- 19 December 2006 – monitoring of existing arrangements between Poles 66 and 69, Poles 73 and 86 and at Pole 95 to update the assessment of threat to known sites.

3.1.7 A basic photographic record of the main elements of the work was compiled by PCA using a digital camera. In addition, the Wayleaves Officer from Alfred McAlpine supplied additional digital images. A selection of the images has been reproduced herein (Plates 1-8).

3.2 Reporting and Archiving

3.2.1 Field notes was compiled for recording purposes and *pro forma* site attendance sheets were compiled after each site visit. A written summary of the results of the work was compiled, as described below in Section 4, using the field notes, photographic record and existing documentation on the archaeological sites along the supply route.

3.2.2 There is no project archive, as such, apart from the digital photographic record. This report, which includes a selection of the digital images, is designed to form a permanent record of the monitoring exercise, for the purposes of archaeological development control.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Poles 60-75

- 4.1.1 When inspected during the route walk-over, this portion of the supply route was heavily vegetated with heather, bracken and gorse, as well as some areas of new tree planting, so that archaeological features were particularly hard to distinguish. The conclusion was that detailed field survey with ground conditions as they were would produce only a very partial record of earthwork and other archaeological remains.
- 4.1.2 Archaeological remains in the presumed ancient cairn field straddled by Poles 66 and 67 could not be easily identified for the reasons stated above. However, one cairn was observed immediately to the east of the proposed access route for Pole 67 (Plate 1). During the route walk-over, this was identified as needing to be clearly marked to prevent disturbance by vehicles. Demarcation was undertaken - using barrier tape affixed to wooden stakes - on the monitoring visit on 5 December. The subsequent monitoring visits confirmed that the demarcation had been respected by the groundwork crews. During the route walk-over, it was noted the portion of the route between Poles 66 and 67 was very uneven, due to earth-fast boulders.
- 4.1.3 During the route walk-over, it was established that the pole and stays required for Pole 68 lay on the eastern side of an existing field boundary wall, so vehicular access to the western side of the boundary wall would not be required. The remains of an earlier walled boundary lying on the western side of the existing wall at this location would thus be unaffected by groundworks. The monitoring visits confirmed that the earlier walled boundary was not disturbed by the groundworks.

4.2 Poles 75-80

- 4.2.1 When inspected during the preliminary site visit and route walk-over, this portion of the supply route was generally heavily vegetated with heather and bracken so that archaeological features were particularly hard to distinguish. Again, the conclusion was that detailed field survey with existing ground conditions would produce only a very partial record of the remains.
- 4.2.2 Despite the vegetation cover, the two scheduled round barrows (SAMs 32617 and 32618) west of the supply route between Poles 75 and 76 were relatively easily identifiable (Figure 3). At least two other possible barrows or cairns were noted in the immediate vicinity of the scheduled monuments (Plates 2, 3 and 4). The SMR contained relatively recent, but undated, Ordnance Survey (OS) maps at 1:2,500 scale, which had been annotated with additional archaeological detail. A large circular 'feature' on this map was identified to the east of the supply route in this area, this being a possible cairn or another round barrow. Several hollows identified in this area during the preliminary site visit possibly represent grouse butts.⁵

⁵ Small stone, wood and turf constructions that give cover to keepers and shooters during grouse shooting.

- 4.2.3 The Box Hall enclosure (SAM 32616) was generally easily identifiable on the moorland immediately to the north-east of Pole 80 (Plate 5). Two small circular 'features' shown on the annotated OS map from the SMR to the south-west of Pole 80 were also identified and these appeared to be stone clearance cairns. A large circular 'feature' shown on the annotated OS map to the south-east of Pole 80 and due south of SAM 32616, potentially represented a large hut circle or small enclosure. However, this 'feature' could not be identified due to vegetation cover. Immediately to the south of this location was what appeared to be a natural hillock, annotated as '*Tumulus*' on the aforementioned OS maps, but possibly a natural outcrop of rock.
- 4.2.4 The intended access route to Poles 79 and 80 had to be varied when it became apparent that trackways running downslope either side of SAM 32616 were not as shown on existing mapping and that significant rutting on a trackway above Howl Dike, to the east of SAM 32616, had created diversionary routes at several locations, one of which ran onto the north-eastern corner of the monument, which was clearly unacceptable. The route used diverged from the supply route south of Pole 78, running up the moor to join an existing network of trackways above Howl Dike. A new route was then used past the eastern side of SAM 31616, but avoiding the delineated boundary of the monument, to allow access to Poles 79 and 80, before rejoining the supply route north of Pole 81.
- 4.2.5 Due to the vegetation cover, very little detail of the known field system east or west of the supply route between Poles 75-80 was observed during either the preliminary site visit, route walk-over or subsequent monitoring visits.
- 4.2.6 All archaeological monuments identified during the preliminary site visit and route walk-over in the vicinity of the portion of the supply route between Poles 75-80 were designated as requiring hi-visibility demarcation to mitigate the impact of the scheme, particularly vehicular movements, on the archaeological resource. During the monitoring visit on 5 December, the perimeter of each of the three SAMs in this portion of the supply route was marked with hi-visibility flags. All other archaeological monuments identified were surrounded with barrier tape affixed to wooden stakes to prevent disturbance by vehicles engaged in the refurbishment scheme.
- 4.2.7 The subsequent monitoring visits confirmed that all demarcation of archaeological monuments in this portion of the supply route had been respected by the groundwork crews. Where wind damage had occurred to barrier tape demarcations (Plate 6), the barriers were reinstated, where possible, during the monitoring visits.
- 4.2.8 During the monitoring visit on 12 December, a feature identified as a possible field clearance cairn was noted close to the access route to Pole 79. It was irregular in plan, with a maximum height of c. 0.30m and constructed in rather haphazard manner from sub-angular stones up to 0.20m in size. It was located 100m NNE of the known cairn immediately to the north of SAM 32616, on the north side of the access route, and 10m north of a stream shown on Ordnance Survey mapping. Due to the dense vegetation cover, the very southern edge of this monument, which may have been previously unidentified, had been unintentionally driven over by a vehicle on the scheme. Therefore, the remains were demarcated and the groundwork crews made aware of their presence.

4.3 Poles 81-97

- 4.3.1 When inspected during the route walk-over, a known funerary cairn close to Pole 86 was relatively easily identifiable, despite the vegetation cover on the moor. The proposed access route diverged to the west of the line of supply route at Pole 85 and it was considered, therefore, that this monument was highly unlikely to be affected by installation of new poles, dismantling of existing poles or by vehicular movements associated with the refurbishment scheme. Nevertheless, during the monitoring visit on 5 December, the cairn was surrounded with barrier tape affixed to wooden stakes to prevent vehicular access (Plate 7).
- 4.3.2 The subsequent monitoring visits on 14 and 19 December confirmed that the monument close to Pole 86 had not been impacted upon in any way by the scheme.
- 4.3.3 When inspected during the route walk-over, the dismantled mineral tramway lying close to, but to the west of, Pole 95 was fairly easily identifiable. No vehicular access to the supply route was possible from the west and the proposed access to Pole 95 was from a road to the south-east of the route. Again, therefore, it was considered highly unlikely that this monument would be affected by installation of new poles, dismantling of existing poles or by vehicular movements associated with the refurbishment scheme. Nevertheless, during the monitoring visit on 5 December, the monument was delineated with barrier tape affixed to wooden stakes to prevent vehicular access (Plate 8).
- 4.3.4 The subsequent monitoring visit on 19 December confirmed that the monument close to Pole 95 had not been impacted upon in any way by the scheme.



Plate 1. Cairn to the east of access route to Pole 67. Looking south-east.



Plate 2. Looking along supply route from Pole 75. Looking south-east.



Plate 3. Features, including SAM 32617 in the rearground, at Pole 75.
Looking south-west.



Plate 4. Detail of cairn east of Pole 75, with SAM 32617 in the rearground.
Looking south-west.



Plate 5. SAM 32616, with Pole 80 in the rearground. Looking south-west.



Plate 6. Wind damage to barrier around SAM 32616, with Pole 79 to the right. Looking west.



Plate 7. Cairn, with Pole 86 to the right. Looking south-west.



Plate 8. South-west end of mineral tramway, near Pole 95. Looking north-east.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Refurbish of the overhead electricity supply route between Commondale and Castleton in the North York Moors National Park was accompanied by a programme of archaeological monitoring in order to prevent significant impact on known or suspected archaeological sites in the vicinity of the route. It was not possible to conduct detailed survey of any of the sites in advance of the scheme, due to existing ground conditions.
- 5.2 A preliminary site visit and full route walk-over in advance of the groundworks allowed known and suspected sites of archaeological importance to be identified. These remains included three scheduled sites above Box Hall in the central portion of the supply route. Subsequently, all identified sites were demarcated with hi-visibility barrier tape or flags in order to warn groundwork crews of their locations.
- 5.3 It can be concluded that the overall methodology employed, including agreement upon a pre-determined set of access routes and vehicular arrangements, ensured that the refurbishment scheme had the minimal possible impact the on archaeological resource along, and in the vicinity of, the supply route.

6. REFERENCES

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7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CREDITS

Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank NEDL for commissioning and funding the investigations described in this report. The liaison role of Mark Joynes, Wayleaves Officer, is acknowledged.

The assistance of Graham Lee, the North York Moors National Park Authority Archaeologist is gratefully acknowledged.

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