

11 March 2017

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL CLOSE
Electricity Substation Project

*Report on an Archaeological Evaluation in the forecourt of No. 8 The Close Winchester,
SO23 9LS*

Local Reference ElecSubSta Eval 2017

Scheduled Monument Ref. SM HA 585, HA1005520
National Grid Reference SU 48118 29173

1 Introduction

1.1 The evaluation trench that is the subject of this report was excavated in the context of a proposal to provide a new electrical sub-station to serve the south-west quarter of Winchester Cathedral Close. The existing substation, which is located at the entrance to the Works Yard in Dome Alley is inadequate.

2 Location

2.1 The site of the proposed new sub-station is located in the entrance forecourt of No. 8, The Close, a house on the north side of the roadway known as Dome Alley, within the Inner Close of Winchester Cathedral.

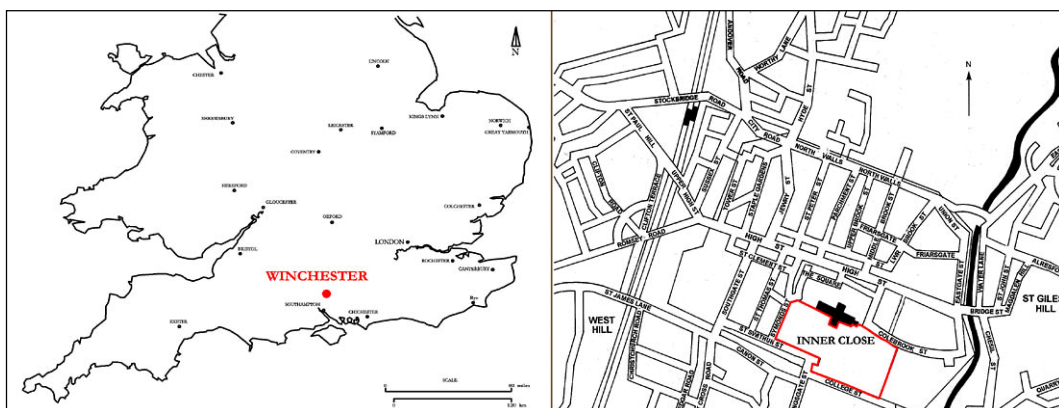


Figure 1. Location of the Inner Close, Winchester Cathedral.

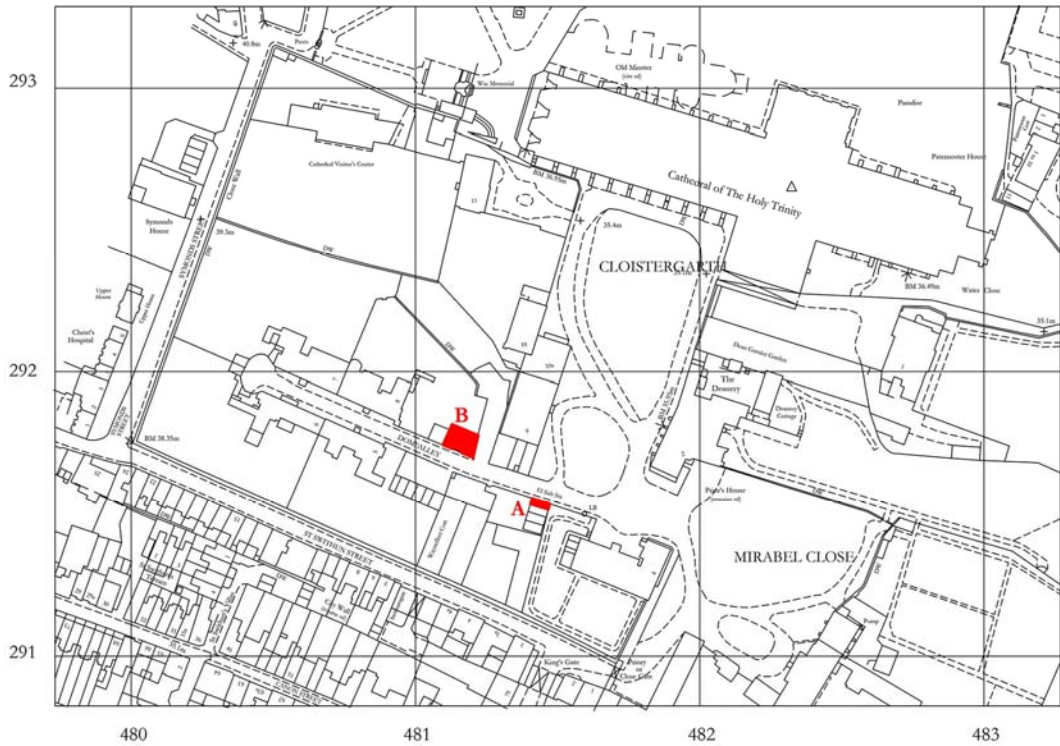


Figure 2. Winchester Cathedral Close. Location of existing sub-station (A), and location of the forecourt of No. 8 The Close, proposed site of the replacement sub-station (B).

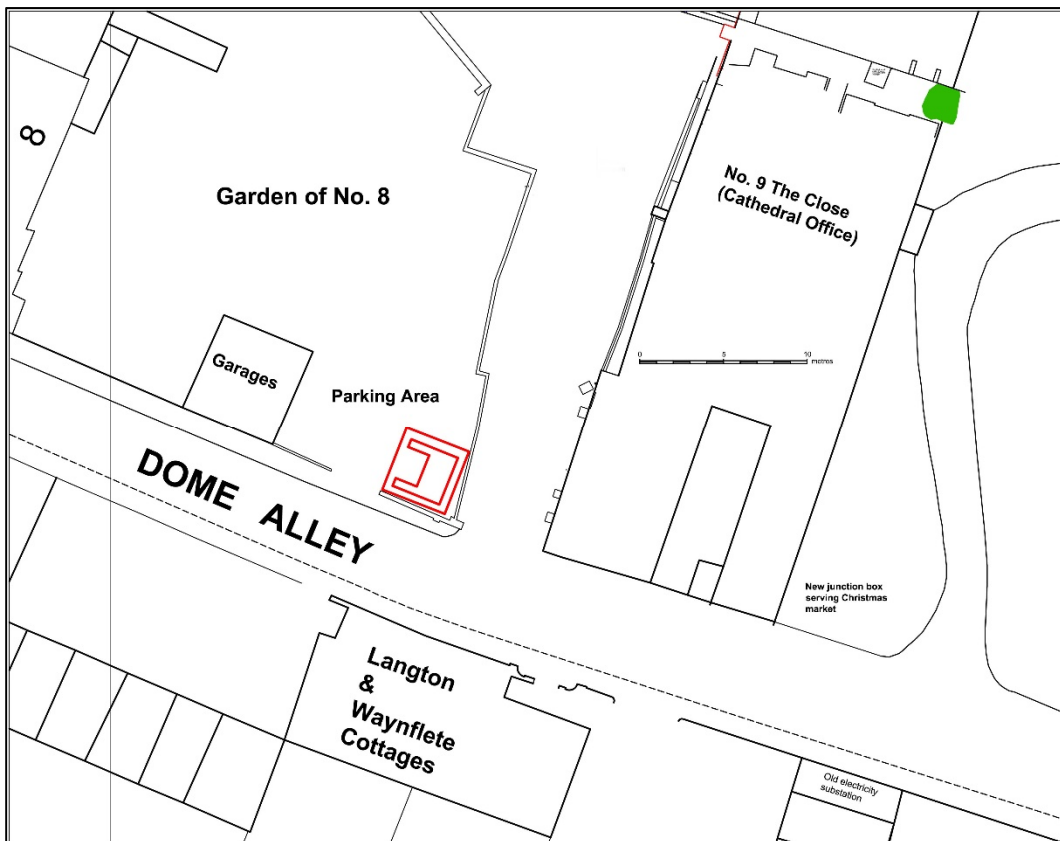


Figure 3. Detail showing in red the location of the proposed new electricity sub-station.



Figure 4. View east in forecourt of No. 8 The Close, the site of the proposed new sub-station.

3 Status of the site and Scheduled Monument Consent

3.1 The Cathedral Close is a Scheduled Historical Monument (Ref. SM Hants 585, HA 1005520).

3.2 The evaluation that is the subject of this report was undertaken under the terms of Scheduled Monument Consent granted 25 May 2016 (HE Ref. S00135656).

4 The evaluation trench

4.1 The evaluation was carried out on 14 February 2017 in dry but cold conditions.

4.2 A trench running east-west measuring 2m long by 700mm wide was excavated using a mechanical digger fitted with a 700mm toothless bucket.

4.3 Beneath a rough surface of miscellaneous flints and remains of gravel *c.* 100mm thick (Context 01). the uppermost layer comprised 250mm of garden loam (Context 02).

4.4 This was followed by a deep layer of loose build-up (Context 03), mostly consisting of building debris (brick, tile etc) in a loam matrix, and including datable artefactual material as described below.

4.5 The loose build-up (Context 03) was followed at 700mm by a harder layer of loam containing brick and roofing tile fragments. Although no surface was discerned, is likely that this represented ground level before Context 03 was deposited—as discussed more fully below.



Figure 5. ESE view in trench showing (right) contexts 02 (garden loam) and 03 (rubble).

5 Datable Artefacts

5.1 The most significant artefacts comprised:

- A fragment of ceramic drain. Mains drainage arrived in Winchester only in the 1880s, therefore providing a *post-quem* date for the build-up in which the piece occurred.
- A piece of a white glazed jar. C19/20
- A fragment of blue ware with a chinoiserie design, possibly the popular ‘Willow Pattern’.
- The remains of a tin-plate receptacle.



Figure 6. Artefactual material from Context 03 (late C19 fill layer).

6 The wall

- 6.1 The wall on the east side of the yard is built of stone and flint, with bands of brickwork. This style suggests that the wall is probably of eighteenth-century date, though a *terminus post quem* is the construction of the houses in Dome Alley (including No. 8) in the 1660s.
- 6.2 The wall face below ground on the east side of the area of the trench was exposed. To a depth of 230mm below the surface this was identical to that just described. 230mm below the present ground surface was the top of a chamfered plinth of brickwork. Below the plinth were the brick footings of the wall, constructed in a very random bond.
- 6.3 The bricks measured 225 x 101 x 65 mm with narrow joints of lime mortar. These dimensions are consistent with the eighteenth-century date proposed for the wall.



Figure 7. East end of trench showing wall footings.

- 6.4 The plinth shows that the brick footings were intended to be visible above ground level, and are therefore broadly consistent with an earlier ground level about 600/700mm below the present level yard surface.

7 Interpretation

- 7.1 The development of the yard is depicted in several maps. In the mid-eighteenth century, the area was part of the formal garden of No. 8, as shown in Godson's survey of 1750 (Figure 8). Although a stable block stood at the ENE corner of the irregularly shaped garden at the east end of the curtilage of No. 8, it appears to have been accessed via the lane leading northwards from Dome Alley, the other side of the garden wall.

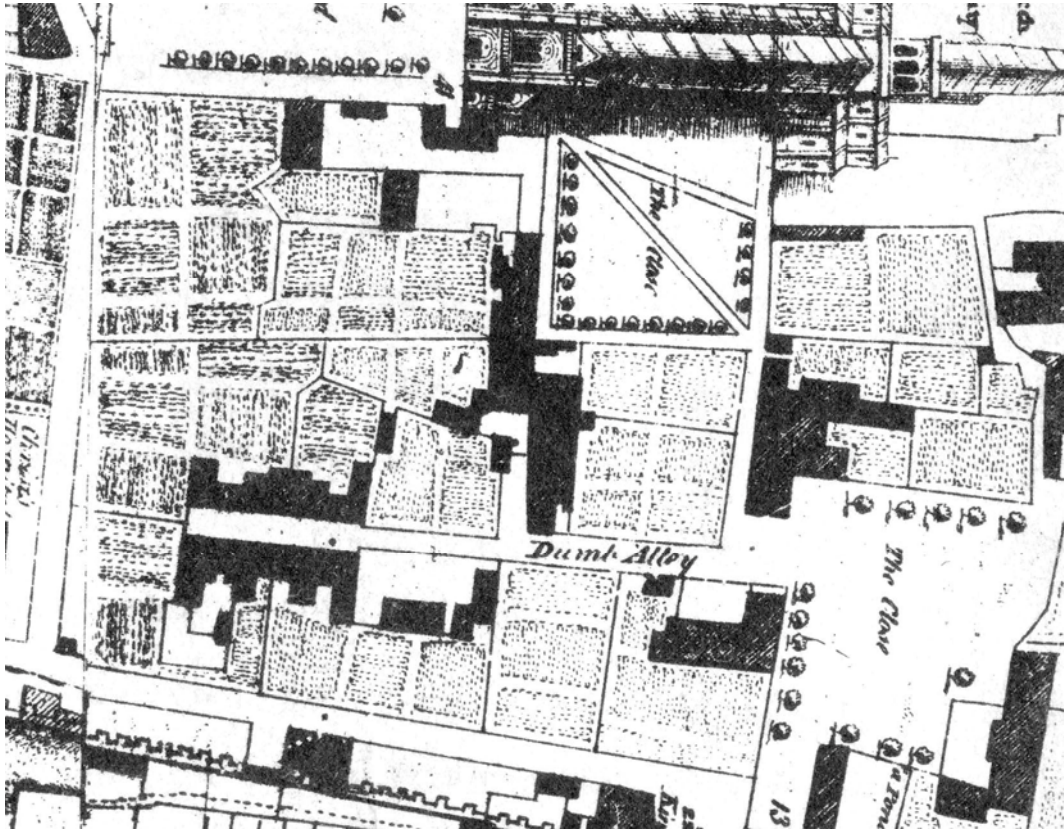


Figure 8. Detail from William Godson's survey of Winchester, 1750, showing Dome Alley.

7.2

The Ordnance Survey Town Plan of Winchester of 1871 (Figure 9) shows that by that date the yard was accessible, as now, from Dome Alley.

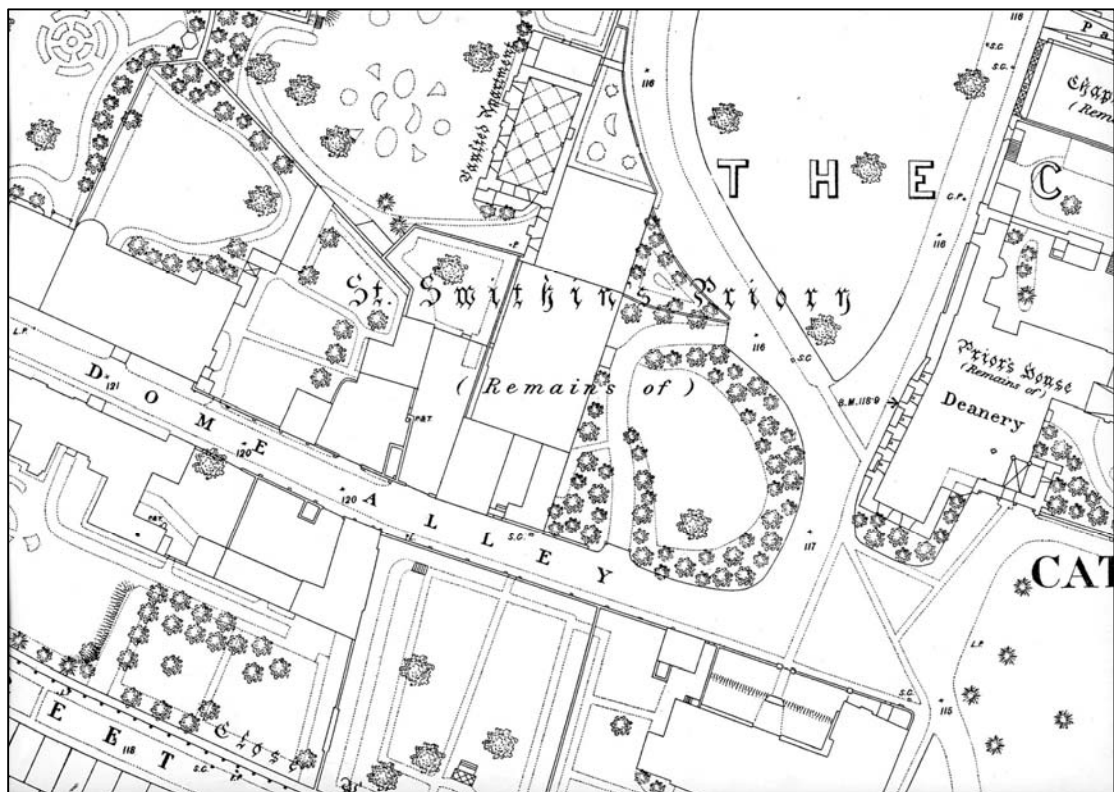


Figure 9. Detail from 1871 Town Plan of Winchester showing Dome Alley.

- 7.3 This implies that by that date the yard and the roadway were at the same level, suggesting that the build-up represented by Context 03 had occurred by that date.
- 7.4 However, the 1871 plan also shows a small structure, presumably a garden shed, in the south-east corner of the area, the site of the proposed substation.
- 7.5 This building was still in existence in 1909 when it was shown on the 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey map, but by 1935 had been demolished as shown by T. D. Atkinson's survey of the Close drainage dating from that year.

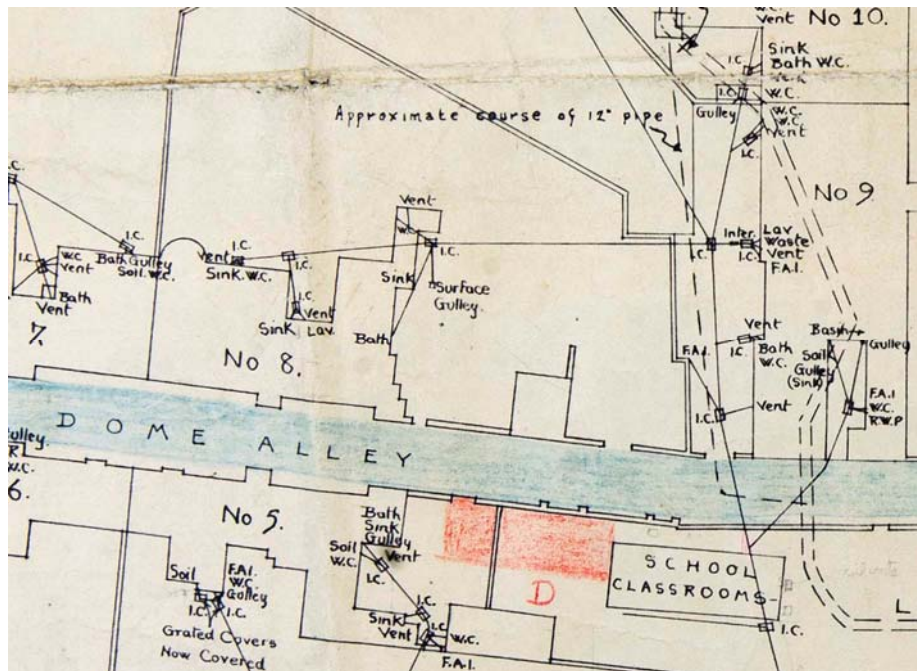


Figure 10. Detail from T. D. Atkinson's plan of the drainage of Winchester Cathedral Close (1935).

- 7.6 The bricks in Context 03 might have derived from the destruction of that small building, though the fact that the brick rubble in Context 03 occurred mainly at the bottom of the context could suggest that the floor of the building was at a lower level than the general level of the yard.
- 7.7 Certainly, the level of the plinth of the garden wall indicates that when the wall was built the ground level of the south-east corner of what was then a garden was about 700mm lower than it is today.

8 Implications for the sub-station project

- 8.1 The schematic diagram supplied by the electricity supply company shows that the depth of intrusion for the required concrete base of the new sub-station will be in the order of 650/700mm. That assumes that the base will be level with the surrounding ground level: in fact the base is likely to be raised somewhat.
- 8.2 The below-ground intrusion will therefore be comfortably accommodated within the late nineteenth/early twentieth century fill layer, Context 03.

8.3 In order to link the sub-station with the cable that has already been laid running down the passage on the east side of the garden wall, the brick footings of the wall will be drilled.

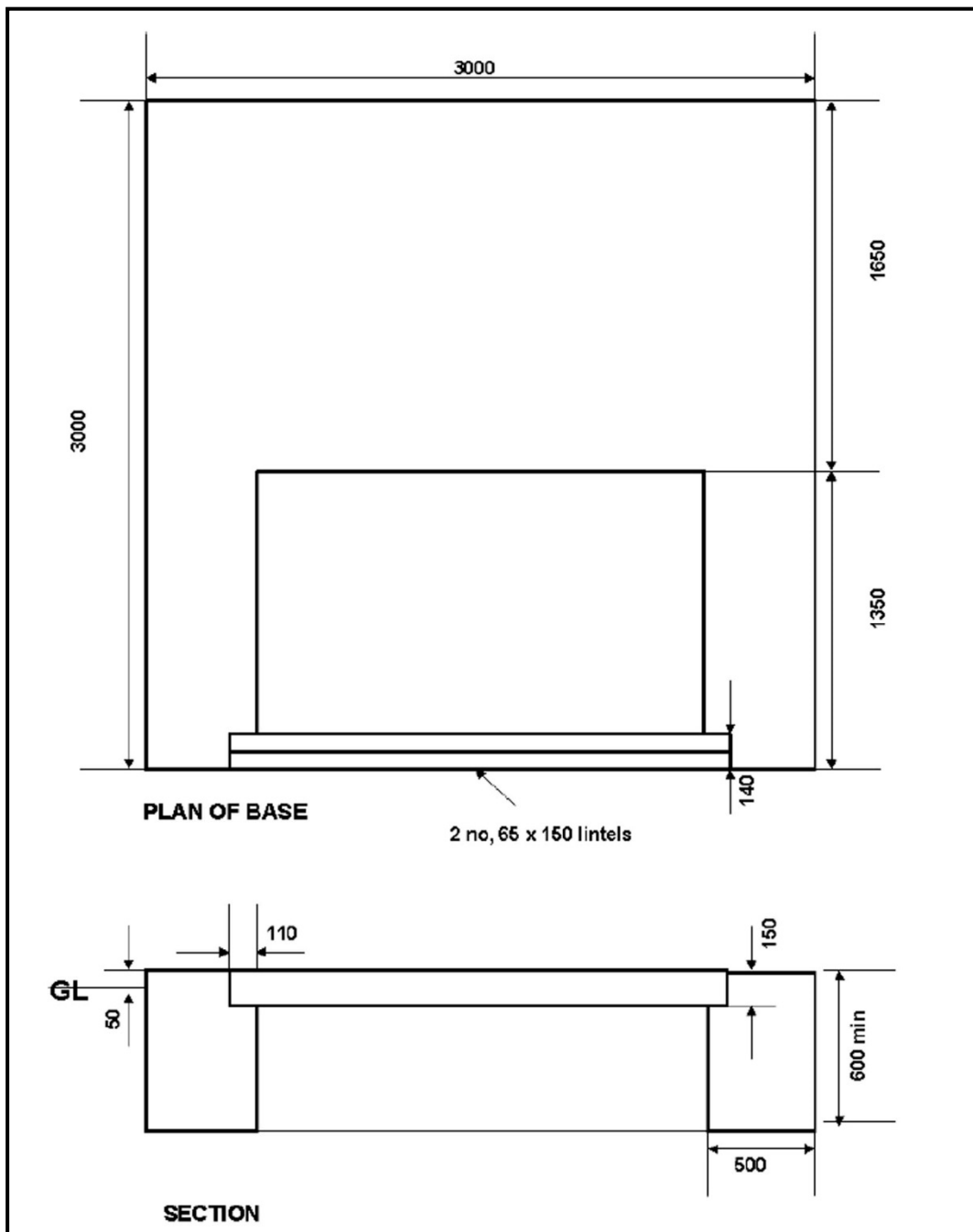


Figure 11. From Foundation requirements for substation base: information to assist third parties in the design and installation of secondary substations for adoption or use by SSE Power Distribution, Guidance Document provided by Southern Electric Power Distribution.