

61960.01



## Catmore, Near Newbury, Berkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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September 2006

**CATMORE,  
NEAR NEWBURY,  
BERKSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT  
ON  
11KV OVERHEAD POLE INSTALLATION**

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**Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Scottish and Southern Energy Group to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the installation of poles for the supply reliability 11kv overhead network from Leckhamstead Primary Substation where it passes the medieval settlement at Catmore, between NGR 445245 180005 and 445489 180240, and the Romano-British settlement south-west of Doctor's Copse, between NGR 445725 180585 and 445866 180803. The work was requested by the Archaeological Officer of West Berkshire Council. The watching brief was carried out on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> June 2006.

The new post holes were augered by machine in close proximity to the old poles. Many of the new holes cut the backfill of the original pole holes. No archaeological deposits or features were observed.

A few finds were recovered from the ground surface in the vicinity of the works. These finds comprised ten pieces of worked flint, one piece of burnt, unworked flint, four sherds of pottery and a modern copper alloy buckle. The worked flint can be broadly dated to the later Neolithic or Bronze Age. The burnt flint is also potentially prehistoric. The pottery includes three sherds of medieval Kennet Valley flint-/chalk-tempered coarsewares. The fourth sherd is from a modern redware flowerpot. The medieval pottery is likely to have come from the medieval settlement of Catmore.

## **Acknowledgements**

The work was commissioned by Scottish and Southern Energy Group and the assistance of Calvin Eales and John Wozencroft is duly acknowledged. Wessex Archaeology would also like to acknowledge the help and advice of Duncan Coe, Archaeological Officer at West Berkshire Council.

The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Charlotte Matthews. The fieldwork was carried out by Jon Milward who also prepared the report. Lorraine Mephram undertook the finds analysis. The illustrations were prepared by Kitty Brandon.

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Scottish and Southern Energy Group to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the installation of poles for the supply reliability 11kv overhead network from Leckhamstead Primary Substation where it passes the medieval settlement at Catmore, between NGR 445245 180005 and 445489 180240, and the Romano-British settlement south-west of Doctor's Copse, between NGR 445725 180585 and 445866 180803. The work was requested by the Archaeological Officer of West Berkshire Council.

1.1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Project Design (Wessex Archaeology 2006) and with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (1999). The watching brief was carried out on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> June 2006.

**1.2 Site Description**

1.2.1 A total of 13 poles were monitored. These are shown on Figure 1, auger holes 14 and 15 were not observed. The auger holes ran north east to south west through pasture, arable farmland and woodland.

1.2.2 Underlying geology for the majority of the area of investigation comprises Upper chalk with clay with flints and tertiary debris to the north (GSGB, Map sheet 267). The site is approximately 200m above Ordnance Datum.

**1.3 Archaeological and Historical background**

1.3.1 The Church of St. Margaret, which has 12th century origins, is situated east of the cluster of buildings that comprise Catmore Farm.

**2 AIM**

2.1.1 The aim of the watching brief as set out in the Project Design was to monitor ground work for archaeological remains that may be revealed. Where this is the case, the aim will be to investigate and record the remains.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 Without exception auger holes for the new poles were located directly adjacent to the extant pole, generally on the north-east side. Holes for the replacement overhead electricity poles were excavated by an 0.45m diameter auger mounted on a JCB 3CX excavator. The auger holes ranged in depth between 1.35 and 1.95m and were a standard 0.55m in diameter. After excavation, surfaces of the circular auger holes were inspected and deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's standard *pro forma* recording system. This included the production of a full photographic record.
- 3.1.2 The auger-holes and find spots were located in relation to the Ordnance Survey national grid using a hand-held GPS.
- 3.1.3 Two auger holes (14 and 15) were not observed because no deposits or finds of archaeological interest were found in the other holes.

### 4 RESULTS

- 4.1.1 Observation of deposits was possible in the side of the holes and arisings. Generally the observed make-up was a mixture of crushed chalk and topsoil suggesting that the deposits through which the auger holes were cut had been disturbed in the past.
- 4.1.2 Occasional glimpses of the undisturbed soil profile and geological deposits were visible in the side of the auger-hole furthest from the old pole. In auger hole 2, the undisturbed soil profile was visible. The topsoil (200) was a friable mid grey-brown silty loam, 0.6m deep, and the underlying deposit (201) was a firm mid brown silty clay. This overlay compacted natural chalk (**Figure 2, Plate 1**). The underlying geological deposit was predominately chalk, although in auger-holes 8 and 11 chalk was not present and a homogenous reddish brown silty clay (clay with flint) was observed (**Figure 2, Plate 2**).
- 4.1.3 Ploughing had created a thin, roughly 0.2m deep, topsoil around the old poles. It contained chalk and lay directly on the backfill of the previous pole holes.

### 5 FINDS

- 5.1.1 A small quantity of finds was recovered during the watching brief. A modern copper alloy buckle (WA1) was recovered from the ground surface of the topsoil north of auger-hole 5. Other artefacts were collected from the ground surface of the topsoil between auger-holes 4 and 300. A central reference point with an approximate 10m radius represents this collection area and is shown on **Figure 1** as WA2. These finds comprised ten pieces of worked flint, one piece of burnt, unworked flint, and four sherds of pottery.
- 5.1.2 The worked flint consists entirely of waste flakes, some patinated and most showing signs of edge damage consistent with their provenance within the

topsoil. In the absence of chronologically distinctive tool types these pieces can only be broadly dated on the grounds of technology (broad, squat waste flakes struck using hard hammer technique) to the later Neolithic or Bronze Age. The burnt flint is of unknown date, although potentially also prehistoric.

- 5.1.3 The pottery includes three sherds of medieval flint-/chalk-tempered coarsewares, of a type common throughout the Kennet Valley from Newbury to Devizes; these wares have a lengthy currency from at least the 11<sup>th</sup> through to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The fourth sherd is from a modern redware flowerpot.
- 5.1.4 This assemblage is not recommended for long term curation, on the grounds of its small size and poorly stratified provenance.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1.1 When the old poles were instated in 1990, rather than the auger method a large hole must have been dug by machine into which the pole was placed and then the hole was backfilled. The auger holes for the replacement poles generally only disturbed the backfill of the old pole holes. Surface finds of medieval pottery from the area of WA2 is likely to be from the medieval settlement of Catmore.

## **7 ARCHIVE**

- 7.1.1 The project archive is currently held by Wessex Archaeology under the project code 61960. Subject to the wishes of the landowner, it is proposed that the archive will be deposited with the local museum.

## **8 REFERENCES**

Wessex Archaeology 2006 *Catmore, Near Newbury, Berkshire, Method Statement for Archaeological Watching Brief on 11KV Overhead Pole Installation* WA ref T10014



## Appendix 1 – Context Descriptions

### Auger hole 4

**Depth:** 1.75m                      **Diameter:** 0.55m

Context No.	Description	Depth (m)
400	New topsoil. Comprises light grey-brown silty clay with natural chalk inclusions.	0.4
401	Natural chalk.	>1.35

### Auger hole 5

**Depth:** 1.75m                      **Diameter:** 0.55m

Context No.	Description	Depth (m)
500	Topsoil. Comprises friable mid grey-brown silty clay.	0.3
501	Subsoil. Comprises mid brown silty clay	0.6
502	Compact natural chalk.	>0.85

### Auger hole 6

**Depth:** 1.75m                      **Diameter:** 0.55m

Context No.	Description	Depth (m)
600	New topsoil. Comprises friable mid-brown silty loam with natural chalk inclusions.	0.15
601	Backfill of current pole foundation. Comprises crushed chalk mixed with some light silty clay.	>1.6

### Auger hole 7

**Depth:** 1.8m                      **Diameter:** 0.55m

Context No.	Description	Depth (m)
700	Topsoil. Comprises slightly reddish brown silty clay.	0.15
701	Backfill of current pole foundation. Comprises crushed chalk in light grey compacted silty clay matrix.	>1.65

### Auger hole 8

**Depth:** 1.8m                      **Diameter:** 0.55m

Context No.	Description	Depth (m)
800	Homogenous firm slightly reddish brown silty clay. Contains occasional broken pieces of flint. Likely some of this has been previously disturbed.	>1.35

### Auger hole 9

**Depth:** 1.3m                      **Diameter:** 0.55m

Context No.	Description	Depth (m)
900	New topsoil. Comprises friable mid-brown silty clay with natural chalk inclusions.	0.15
901	Backfill of current pole foundation. Comprises crushed chalk in light grey compacted silty clay matrix.	>1.15

**Auger hole 10****Depth:** 1.6m                      **Diameter:** 0.55m

<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
1000	New topsoil. Comprises friable light grey-brown silt with natural chalk inclusions.	0.15
1001	Backfill of current pole foundation. Comprises crushed chalk in light grey compacted silty clay matrix.	>1.45

**Auger hole 11****Depth:** 1.6m                      **Diameter:** 0.55m

<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
1100	New topsoil. Comprises friable light grey-brown silt with natural chalk inclusions.	0.15
1101	Backfill of current pole foundation. Comprises crushed chalk in light grey compacted silty clay matrix.	>1.15

**Auger hole 12****Depth:** 1.65m                      **Diameter:** 0.55m

<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
1200	Topsoil. Comprises light brown silt	0.15
1201	Backfill of current pole foundation. Comprises crushed chalk in light grey compacted silty clay matrix.	>1.15

**Auger hole 13****Depth:** 1.7m                      **Diameter:** 0.55m

<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
1300	Backfill of current pole foundation. Comprises crushed chalk in light grey compacted silty clay matrix.	>1.7

**Auger hole 100****Depth:** 1.6m                      **Diameter:** 0.55m

<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
100	New topsoil. Comprises light grey-brown silty clay with natural chalk inclusions.	0.3
101	Backfill of current pole foundation. Comprises crushed chalk in light grey compacted silty clay matrix.	>1.3

**Auger hole 200****Depth:** 1.6m                      **Diameter:** 0.55m

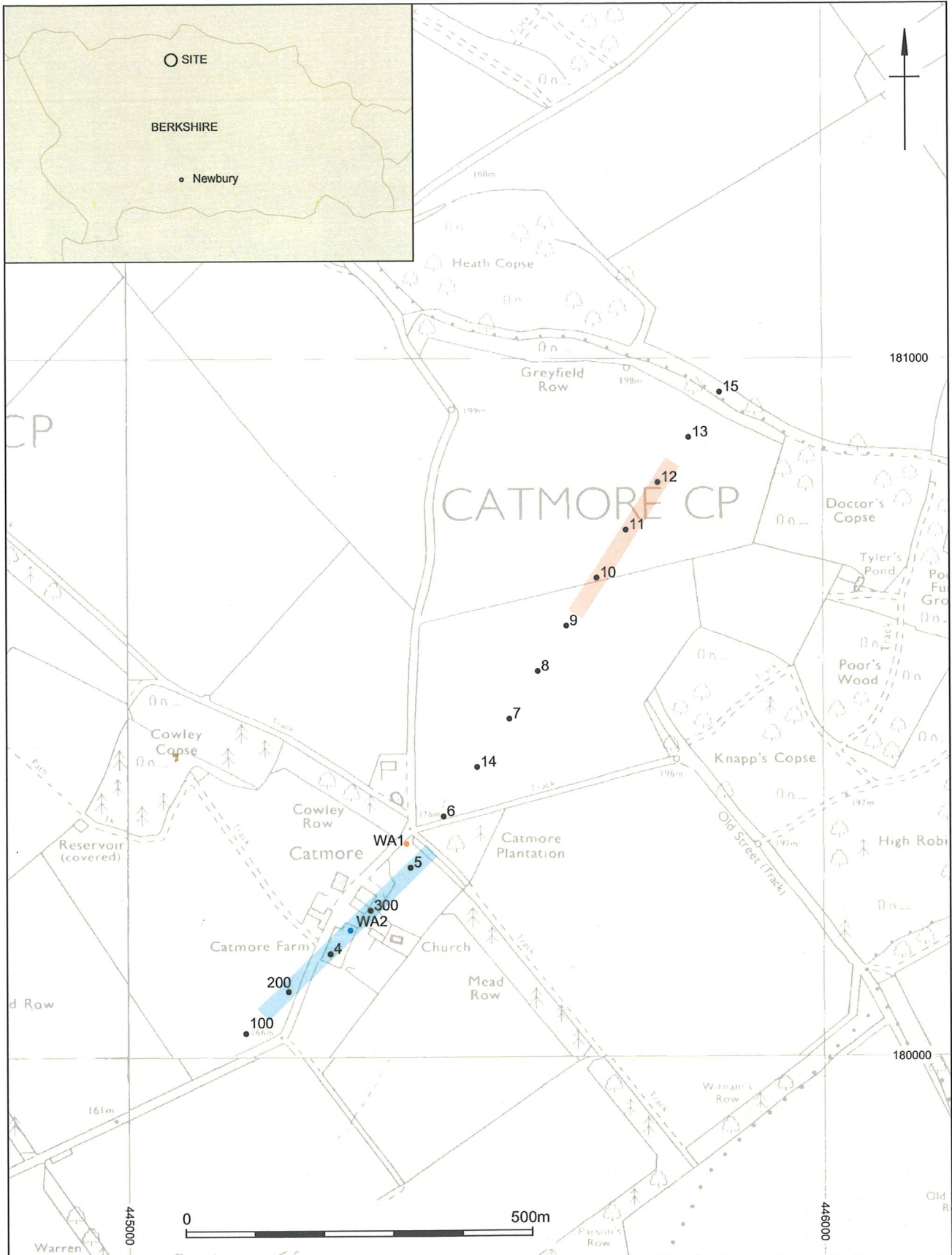
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
200	Topsoil. Comprises friable mid grey-brown silty loam.	0.6
201	Subsoil. Comprises firm mid-brown silty clay.	0.4
202	Natural chalk.	>0.8
203	New topsoil. Comprises light grey-brown silty clay with natural chalk inclusions.	0.2
204	Backfill of current pole foundation. Comprises crushed chalk in light grey compacted silty clay matrix.	1.4

**Auger hole 300****Depth:** 1.95m**Diameter:** 0.55m

<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
300	New topsoil. Comprises light grey-brown silty clay with natural chalk inclusions.	0.3
301	Backfill of current pole foundation. Comprises crushed chalk in light grey compacted silty clay matrix.	1.2
302	Natural chalk. Slightly yellow in colour.	>1.5

**Other contexts**

<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
WA1	Topsoil in field south east of Catmore Farm.
WA2	Topsoil in field south west of Knapps close.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Auger hole</li> <li>● Bronze object</li> <li>● Flint</li> <li>■ Roman Settlement</li> <li>■ Medieval Settlement</li> </ul>	Digital Map Data © (2006) XYZ Digital Map Company. Basemap supplied by client. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.		
	Date: 10/07/06	Revision Number: 0		
	Scale: 1:8000	Illustrator: KJB		
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Location of auger holes

Figure 1



Plate 1: Auger hole 2, facing SE



Plate 2: Auger hole 11, facing SE

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