

BURIED ELECTRICITY CABLE AT NETTLECOMBE LODGE, NETTLECOMBE, EXMOOR, SOMERSET

(NGR ST 0492 3691)

Results of an archaeological watching brief

Exmoor HER no. EEM14937

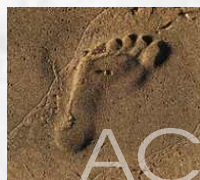
Somerset County Museum accession no. TTNCM 84/2021

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On behalf of:
Western Power Distribution

Document No: ACD2585/2/1

Date: December 2021



archaeology

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Client	Western Power Distribution
Report Number	ACD2585/2/1
Date	21 December 2021
Status	Version 2
Report Author	Paul Rainbird
Contribution	-
Checked by	Andrew Passmore
Approved by	Andrew Passmore

Acknowledgements

The watching brief was commissioned by Western Power Distribution and managed for them by Chris Smith, and for AC archaeology by Andrew Passmore. The site works were carried out by George Gandham, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Stella Smith. The advice of Shirley Blaylock, Exmoor National Park Authority Conservation Officer (Historic Environment), is gratefully acknowledged.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AC archaeology in December 2021 during the relocation, through burial, of an electricity cable at Nettlecombe Lodge, Nettlecombe, Exmoor, Somerset (NGR ST 0492 3691).

No features deposits or finds of archaeological interest were exposed during the watching brief. No evidence was found relating to the demolished northern part of the lodge or the probable earlier building recorded on the 1802 Ordnance Survey map. It is clear from the deposit sequence that the parking area to the north of the lodge has been significantly landscaped, and it is unlikely that any remains of the demolished northern part of the lodge will survive.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

1.1 This document sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by AC archaeology, on behalf of Western Power Distribution, during the relocation, through burial, of an electricity cable on 6 December 2021 at Nettlecombe Lodge, Nettlecombe, Exmoor, Somerset (ST 0492 3691). The investigations were requested by the Conservation Officer (Historic Environment) of the Exmoor National Park Authority in correspondence with Western Power Distribution. The location of the site is shown on Figure 1.

1.2 The works involved the replacement of an overhead electricity cable with a new underground cable. The route commenced at an existing pole in the field on the east side of the B3190 and to the south of the lodge. The new trench was located within the field to the north of the pole, then branched west and then north into the highway. To the north of the lodge it crossed the road and passed into the property within the current vehicular entrance. Its alignment was then southwest back towards the north side of the lodge, where the cable route terminated.

1.3 Nettlecombe Lodge is a Grade II Listed Building (National Heritage List for England entry 1057572; Exmoor National Park Authority Historic Environment Record entry MSO10502) and is located within the southern part of Nettlecombe parish on the western side of the B3190. The property lies at a height of approximately 190m above Ordnance Datum on the west side of a steeply-sloping valley that contains a stream flowing northeast from a spring line through the nearby Nettlecombe Court. The underlying geology comprises Devonian slate of the Ilfracombe Slates Formation; there are no overlying superficial deposits (British Geological Survey 2021).

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The archaeological interest relates to the association of Nettlecombe Lodge with the nearby Nettlecombe Court (including associated Registered Park and Garden). The estate was owned by the Trevelyan family from the late medieval period until the mid-20th century. The lodge forms part of the improvements to the estate made in the 1820s, which included the construction of a small number of buildings around the periphery of the court.

- 2.2** A building is shown at this location on the Ordnance Survey 3-inch to 1-mile map of 1802, although whether this is the current lodge is unknown. The map is too small a scale to show much detail, but the building appears to be square or rectangular.
- 2.3** The present building is shown on the St Decumans tithe map of 1841 within plot 1545 where it is labelled as a 'lodge'. The structure has a wider north section with a projection on its east side, and a narrower rear section to the south. The map also shows 'features' attached to the north, west and southeast sides; the latter survives as an integral open-sided, slate-roofed veranda. In the accompanying apportionment of 1841 the plot was described as a *cottage and garden*, owned by Sir John Trevelyan and occupied by Henry Gawler.
- 2.4** The First Edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1888 records that the northern part of the building had been demolished, and one of the earlier rear structures had been incorporated into the main body of the lodge. The Second Edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1904 records no change to the structure, although the front veranda is correctly depicted as open sided. The map also depicts a pump (and therefore presumably a well) adjacent to the east side of the building.

3. AIMS

- 3.1** The aim of the archaeological monitoring and recording was specifically to preserve by record any buried remains (archaeological features, deposits or finds) associated with the demolished northern part of the lodge (as recorded on the 1841 tithe map) that may be exposed during groundworks associated with the scheme. An additional aim was to identify any below-ground evidence for the probable earlier building recorded on the 1802 Ordnance Survey map.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Passmore 2021) and with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (revised 2020). In line with the methodology set out in the project design the relevant groundworks monitored were specifically the excavations within the property, to the north of the lodge.
- 4.2** All features and deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2* (revised August 2012).

5. RESULTS (Plan Fig. 2; Plates 1-4)

- 5.1** Two trenches were excavated by machine within the gravel-covered parking area on the northeast side of the property (Trenches 1 and 2). The remainder of the cabling within the property was to be moled.
- 5.2** Trench 1 was located adjacent to and within the gateway to the property. It measured 1.7m long by 0.3m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.7m. Beneath the modern surface dressing only natural subsoil comprising red degraded stone was exposed.

- 5.3 Trench 2 was excavated 3m to the southwest of Trench 1 and was positioned against a drystone garden revetment wall in front of the house. It measured 0.8m long by 0.3m wide and was also excavated to a depth of 0.7m. A similar deposit sequence as Trench 1 was exposed although bedrock was present at the base. There were no finds from either trench.

6. COMMENTS

- 6.1 No features deposits or finds of archaeological interest were exposed during the watching brief.
- 6.2 No evidence was found relating to the demolished northern part of the lodge or the probable earlier building recorded on the 1802 Ordnance Survey map. It is clear from the deposit sequence that the parking area to the north of the lodge has been significantly landscaped, and it is unlikely that any remains of the demolished northern part of the lodge will survive.

7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 7.1 This report comprises the archive for the project.
- 7.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed using the unique identifier **429498**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

8. SOURCES CONSULTED

British Geological Survey Online Viewer, 2021, www.bgs.ac.uk

Exmoor Historic Environment Record, <https://www.exmoorher.co.uk/map>

National Heritage List for England, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

Ordnance Survey 3-inch to 1-mile map, surveyor's draft sheet 42 part 2, 1802

Ordnance Survey 25-inch Somerset map sheet XLVIII.16

First edition, surveyed 1887, published 1888

Second edition, revised 1902, published 1904

Passmore, A., 2021, *Nettlecombe Lodge, Nettlecombe, Exmoor, Somerset, (Centred on NGR ST 04921 36911), Written Scheme of Investigation for a programme of archaeological monitoring, excavation and recording, Exmoor HER event no. EEM14937, Somerset County Museum accession no. TTNCM 84/2021. AC archaeology doc. no. ACD2585/1/1.*

St Decumans tithe map and apportionment (both 1841)



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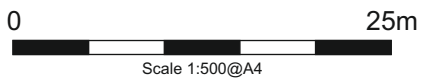
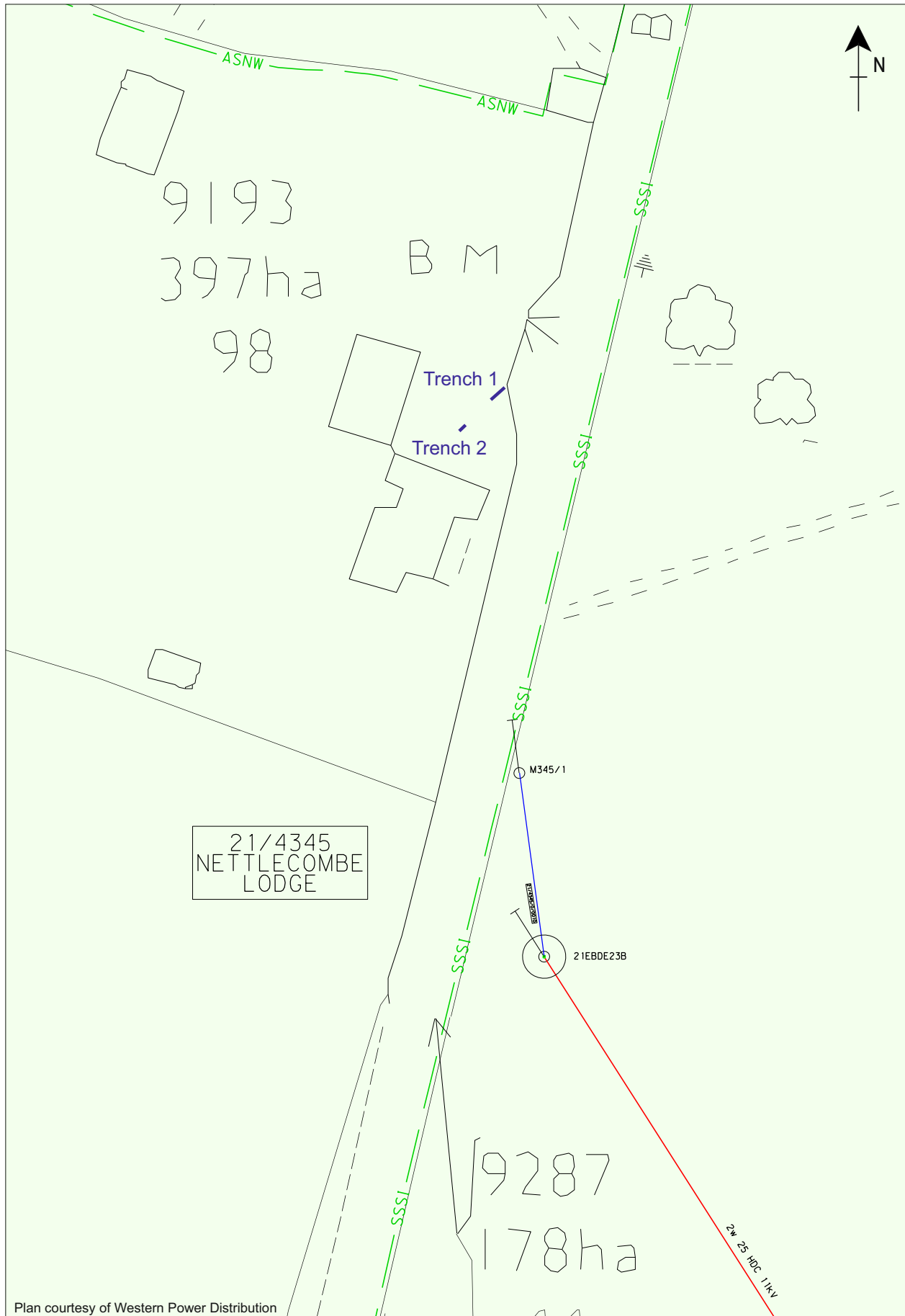


PROJECT

**Buried Electricity Cable at Nettlecombe Lodge,
Nettlecombe, Exmoor, Somerset**

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site



PROJECT

Buried Electricity Cable at Nettlecombe Lodge,
Nettlecombe, Exmoor, Somerset

TITLE

Fig. 2: Locations of monitored
trenches





Plate 1: General view of the working area, looking southwest



Plate 2: General view following the excavation of the trenches, Trench 1 in the foreground and a previously excavated trench to the left, looking south



Plate 3: Trench 1, looking southeast (1m scale)



Plate 4: Trench 2, looking southeast (0.5m scale)

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