

Scotia Archaeology

**REPORT
TO
SCOTTISH & SOUTHERN ENERGY**

**NEW POWER SUPPLY
AT
TOMDOW, CASTLETON,
LOCHGILPHEAD, ARGYLL**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF**

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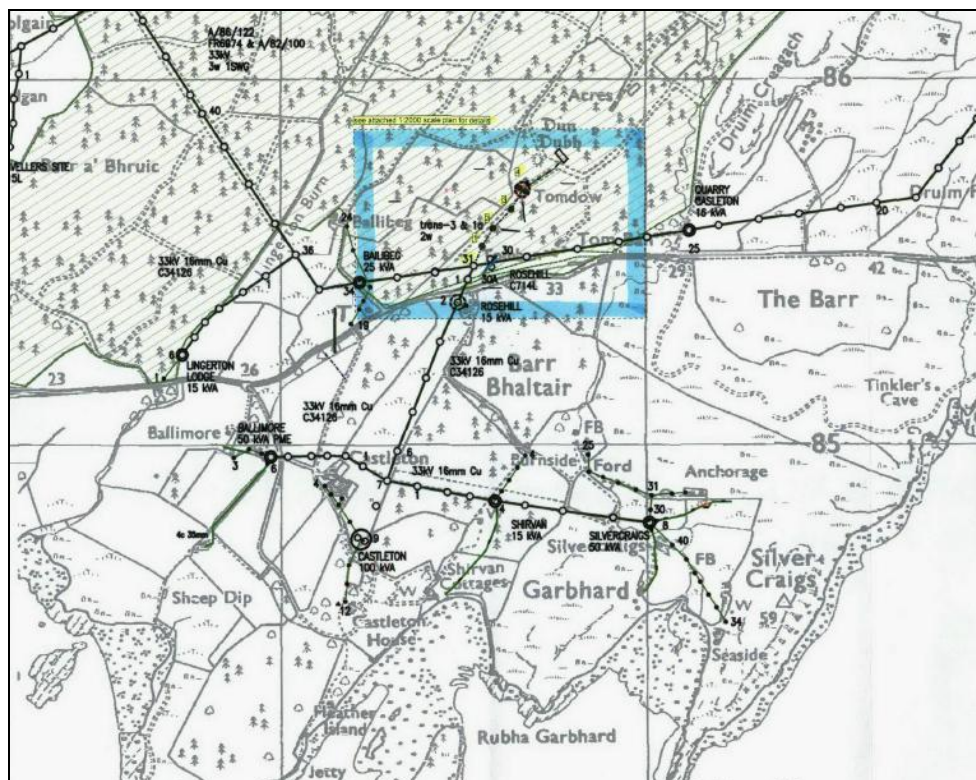
INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken for Scottish & Southern Energy plc (SSE) during the installation of a new power supply at Tomdow, Castleton near Lochgilphead, Argyll. The new supply is for the depot, workshop and offices of a haulage company.

The new 33kv line is linked to Pole 31 on the existing Lochgilphead to Port Ann overhead line and comprises four poles, the last of which is a transformer pole (Pole 4) from where an underground cable runs to the new industrial facility. The underground section and the transformer pole are located close to two known archaeological monuments. As a consequence, Argyll & Bute Council, on the advice of the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS), imposed a condition whereby an archaeological watching brief be implemented during trenching for Pole 4 and the underground cable.

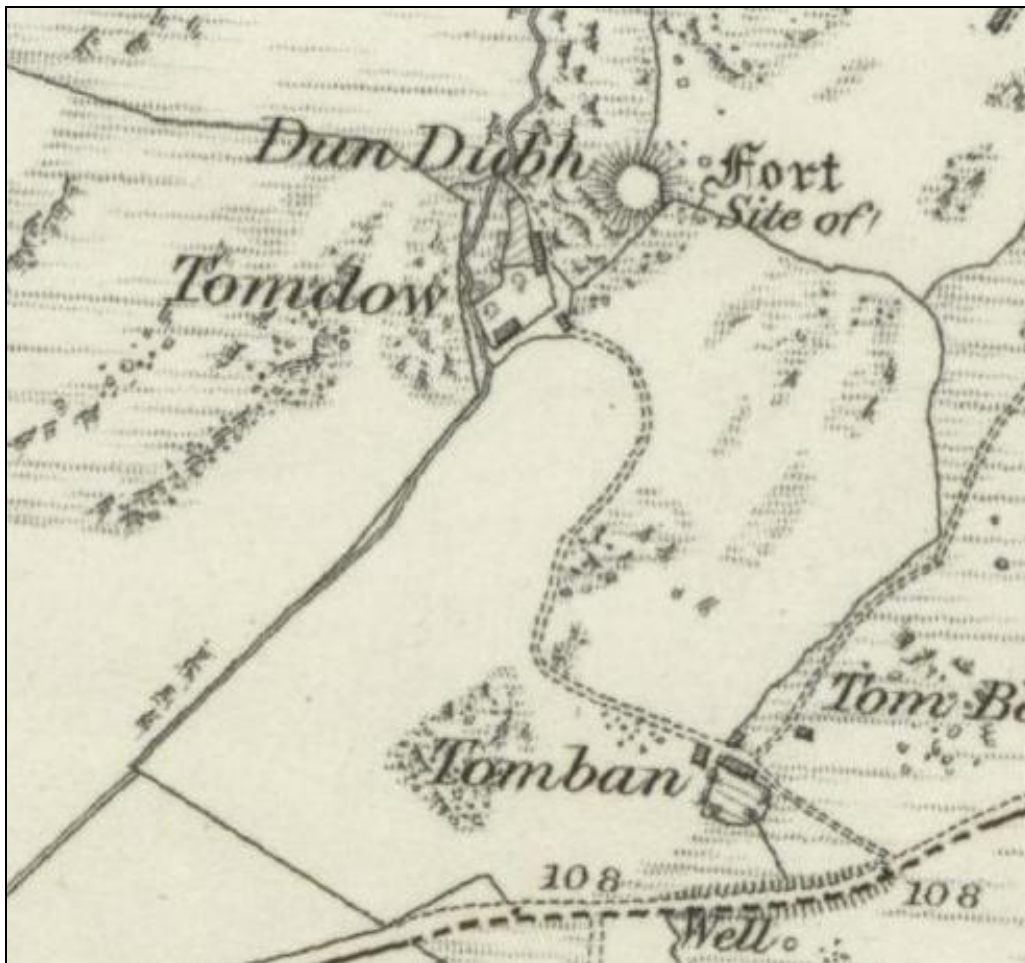
THE SITE

The site is located a short distance north of the A83 trunk road and 3km south-east of Lochgilphead, within an area of commercial forestry much of which had been felled recently. At the time of the watching brief, the haulage company's large new structure had already been built (at approximately NR 88770 85790) and a compound erected around it, the development being accessed by an existing forestry road.



SSE's location plan of the new power line near Castleton

Two known sites of archaeological importance are located near the new power line. The first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6-inch map of 1873 (Argyllshire, sheet 171) shows the farmstead of Tomdow centred on approximately NR 8860 8570, close to the new line. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) list this monument as NR88NE 40. At the time of the first OS map the settlement, which probably dates from the late 18th or early 19th century, consisted of three roofed and one unroofed buildings and an enclosure but now comprises only ruins partially hidden by forestry brash and undergrowth of saplings and bramble.



Extract from the first edition OS map, showing the locations of Tomdow and Dun Dubh

In addition, the cable trench passes close to the base of a small hillock upon which stand the remains of a late prehistoric fort known as Dun Dubh (RCAHMS: NR88NE 8), at NR 8870 8577. The dun measures 19m by 17m with surrounding walls 3.5m thick and surviving to a maximum height of 1m but which are now covered with vegetation. Although the cable trench does not rise above the base of the mound, it is possible that the remains of an access route to the fort may survive at a low level and hence be at risk from ground disturbance in the area.



The summit of Dun Dubh, viewed from the south

THE WATCHING BRIEF

The trench for Pole 4 and the cable trench were excavated by machine, this work being monitored on 20 January 2015 by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology. The principal objective of the watching brief was to note and record the remains of any structures or features associated with the pre-Improvement settlement of Tomdow and the fort of Dun Dubh that might have survived below ground.

In the case of Tomdow this could include the foundations of hitherto unrecorded buildings or field walls or perhaps other evidence of field systems. In addition, monitoring ensured that the standing remains of Tomdow's buildings, which stood close to the trenches, were not damaged during these operations.

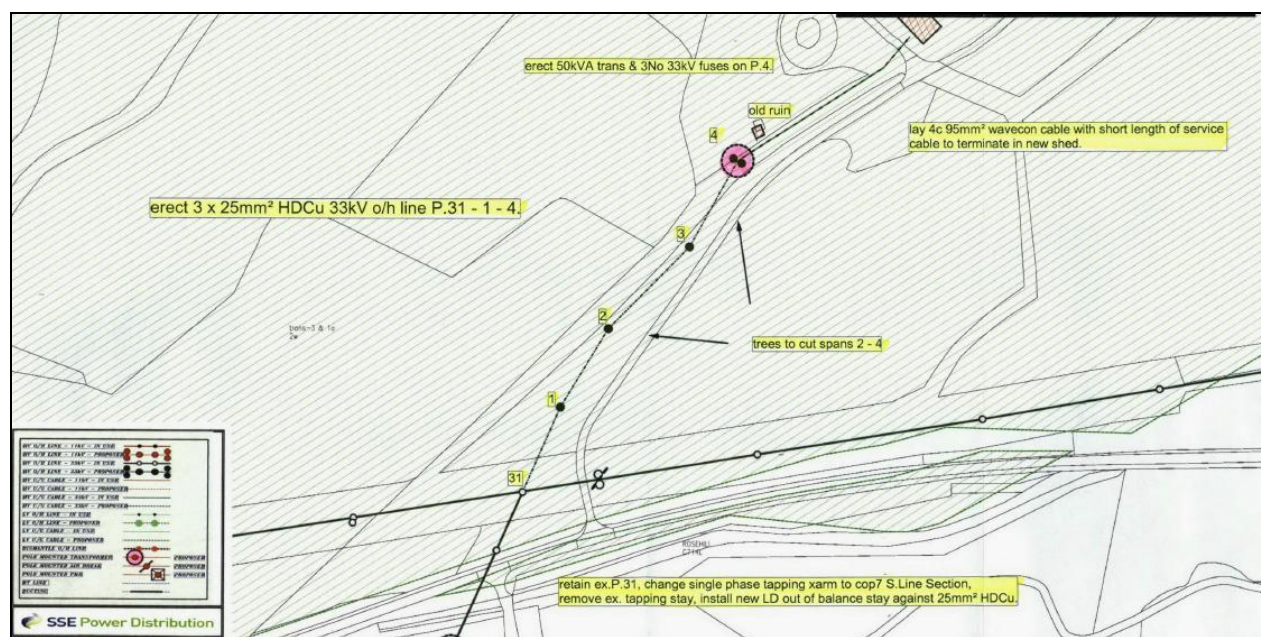
Although the principal features associated with Dun Dubh are located at the summit of a knoll, it is possible that the remains of an access track could survive below ground. In case such a feature does survive, the watching brief was maintained during the excavation of the cable trench which ran around the base of the mound, on its south-east side.

Pole 4

Pole 4, located at NR 88667 85693, is an H-pole which required a trench 3m long (north-west/south-east) by 0.8m wide and 1.8m deep. The trench cut through 0.2m of dark brown, peaty topsoil which gave directly onto glacial till of orange clay and small stones.

Stay trench

Pole 4 is at the terminus of the overhead stretch of the new line and required two stays to ensure its stability. The wooden bases of both stays were located in a single trench which was located some 8m north-east of the pole. The trench measured 3.5m north-west/south-east by 0.8m wide and 1.8m deep. As in the pole trench, it cut through 0.2m of dark brown topsoil and underlying orange glacial till.



SSE plan, showing the location of the new overhead line and underground cable

Cable trench

The cable trench ran from the base of Pole 4 to NR 88759 85762 along gently rising ground, terminating some 30m short of the new industrial building. Between that point and the building the cable had been installed during earlier development work. The trench was approximately 130m long, 0.8m wide and 0.8-1.0m deep and cut through 0.2-0.3m of dark brown, peaty topsoil and underlying glacial till. Here the till comprised mainly orange clay with stones, some of them large, although in places the clay was grey in colour.

No structures, features or deposits of archaeological significance were uncovered in any of the trenches and no artefacts of any age retrieved from them. However, it should be noted that the area had been cleared of forestry only recently and both the planting and harvesting of trees tend to cause extensive disruption to the ground. In addition, the north-east end of the cable trench ran through an area that had been heavily disturbed in recent times, probably during the construction of the industrial unit and the area immediately around it.



The cable trench viewed from the south-west with the ruins of one of the buildings of Tomdow on the left

CONCLUSIONS

The absence of any features of archaeological significance exposed during this exercise merely shows that nothing survived in the trenches themselves. Significant remnants of Tomdow are still clearly visible and further evidence of the settlement, perhaps already demolished by the time of the first edition OS map, may survive below ground. Furthermore, Dun Dubh must have had some sort of access track, traces of which might still survive although it is thought likely that such a feature would have probably been located around the east or north-east arc of the monument.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

The photographs listed below form part of the site archive and most are not reproduced in this report.

- 1 Dun Dubh, viewed from the south
- 2 The pole trench, viewed from the south-east
- 3 The location of the pole trench with one of the buildings of Tomdow and Dun Dubh beyond, viewed from the south
- 4 The remains of Tomdow, viewed from the south-west. Pole 4 is being erected on the right
- 5 The stay trench, viewed from the south-west
- 6-7 The cable trench, viewed from the north-east
- 8 The cable trench, viewed from the south-west