

# Scotia Archaeology

REPORT  
TO  
SCOTTISH & SOUTHERN ENERGY

EARTH CABLE TRENCH  
AT  
MORELAGGAN,  
ARROCHAR, ARGYLL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF  
APRIL 2016

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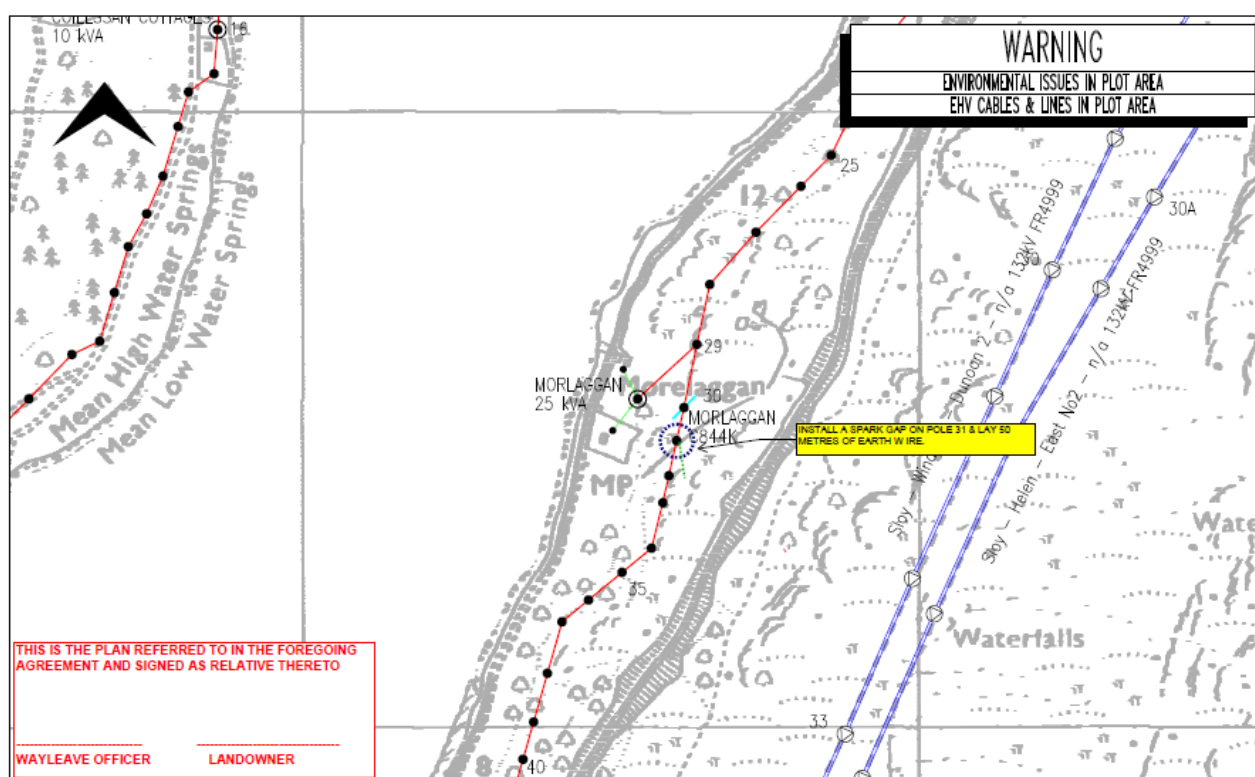
## INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken in April 2016 for Scottish & Southern Energy plc (SSE) during the excavation of a trench to accommodate an earth cable at Morelaggan, near Arrochar, Argyll.

The trench was close to the pre-Improvement settlement of High Morlaggan which prompted the watching brief.

## THE SITE

Morelaggan now comprises just two houses situated on the A814 Glasgow to Arrochar road which runs along the east side of the north-east arm of Loch Long, some 3km south of Arrochar. Morelaggan's location is shown on the map below, supplied by SSE.



*Map showing the location of the power line at Morelaggan*

The former settlement of High Morlaggan (or Murlagan) is centred on NN 2773 0163 and dates from at least as early as 1514. It is now visible as the ruins of five buildings, several enclosures and remnants of a head dyke which can be traced some distance to the south of the township. Evidently, the site was occupied until at least 1916. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) has allocated the monument number NN20SE 42 to it.

The ground rises up quite steeply eastwards from the loch, High Morlaggan being situated some distance up the slope which is covered with coarse vegetation, mainly bracken. The site is represented on the map as two enclosures and attached buildings a short distance south-east of Pole 28, an angle pole.



*The remains of High Morlaggan, viewed from the east*

## THE WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief was undertaken by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology on 26 April 2016, a dry, cold day with a strong northerly wind. Trenching was undertaken using a 5-tonne mechanical excavator.

It had been intended to run the earth cable from Pole 31, as shown on the map above. Pole 31 stands adjacent to the head dyke associated with High Morlaggan and the proposed course of the earth cable trench would have cut through it. However, it was decided that the ground at Pole 31 was too steep to allow the excavator to be operated safely in that area. As a consequence, the trench was run from Pole 28, some 400m further north where the slope was less severe.

Pole 28 is situated down-slope from the upstanding remains of High Morlaggan, in an area where no above-ground features of archaeological interest are evident. The pole is located at NN 27675 01707 and the earth cable trench ran some 15m westwards from it. The trench measured 0.5m wide and 0.7m deep. It cut through a mere 0.1m of black, peaty topsoil and underlying glacial till of orange sand and small boulders.

No structures, features or deposits of archaeological significance were uncovered within the trench and no artefacts retrieved from it.



*Earth cable trench, viewed from the west*

## CONCLUSIONS

Nothing of archaeological interest was found during the watching brief. Numerous field clearance cairns and the remains of rig and furrow agriculture have been noted on the slope below High Morlaggan although no evidence of either was encountered within or near the cable trench.