

Scotia Archaeology

**REPORT
TO
SCOTTISH & SOUTHERN
ELECTRICITY NETWORKS**

**TRENCHING AT POWER LINES
AROUND THE
KILMARTIN VALLEY, ARGYLL**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEFS
AUGUST 2017 TO JUNE 2018**

*Lismore
Dollerie Terrace
Crieff
Perthshire
Tel: 01764-652638
email: scotarc@btinternet.com*

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of archaeological watching briefs undertaken for Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) during the excavation of trenches for new wooden poles and for several earth wire trenches for spark gaps on overhead power lines in the Kilmartin valley and Kilmichael Glen, Argyll. In addition, trenching was also monitored during the installation of an underground cable to a new EE mast at Achnashelloch, at the mouth of Kilmichael Glen.

The archaeological work was commissioned by Gavin Carswell, wayleave manager at SSEN, Oban and carried out by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology between 28 August 2017 and 11 June 2018.

SSEN supplied several maps indicating where this work was to be carried out. The team undertaking the pole replacements decided that a small number of the poles specified as faulty were actually in good condition and did not need to be replaced. However, several poles that had not been identified as faulty were found to be defective and, as a consequence, were replaced.

THE KILMARTIN VALLEY

The Kilmartin valley is renowned for the density and richness of its archaeological record, particularly of late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age ritual and burial sites. Kilmichael Glen, which runs north-eastwards from the main valley, also has many prehistoric sites, including many examples of rock art, such as cup-marked and cup and ring-marked stones.

Several sites are designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments and are protected by legislation. Among these are burial cairns, standing stones and the early historic fort of Dunadd. Many non-scheduled monuments are also recognized as being of high cultural value, this group including the so-called 'linear cemetery' a line of burial cairns arranged in a north/south axis just to the west of the village of Kilmartin.

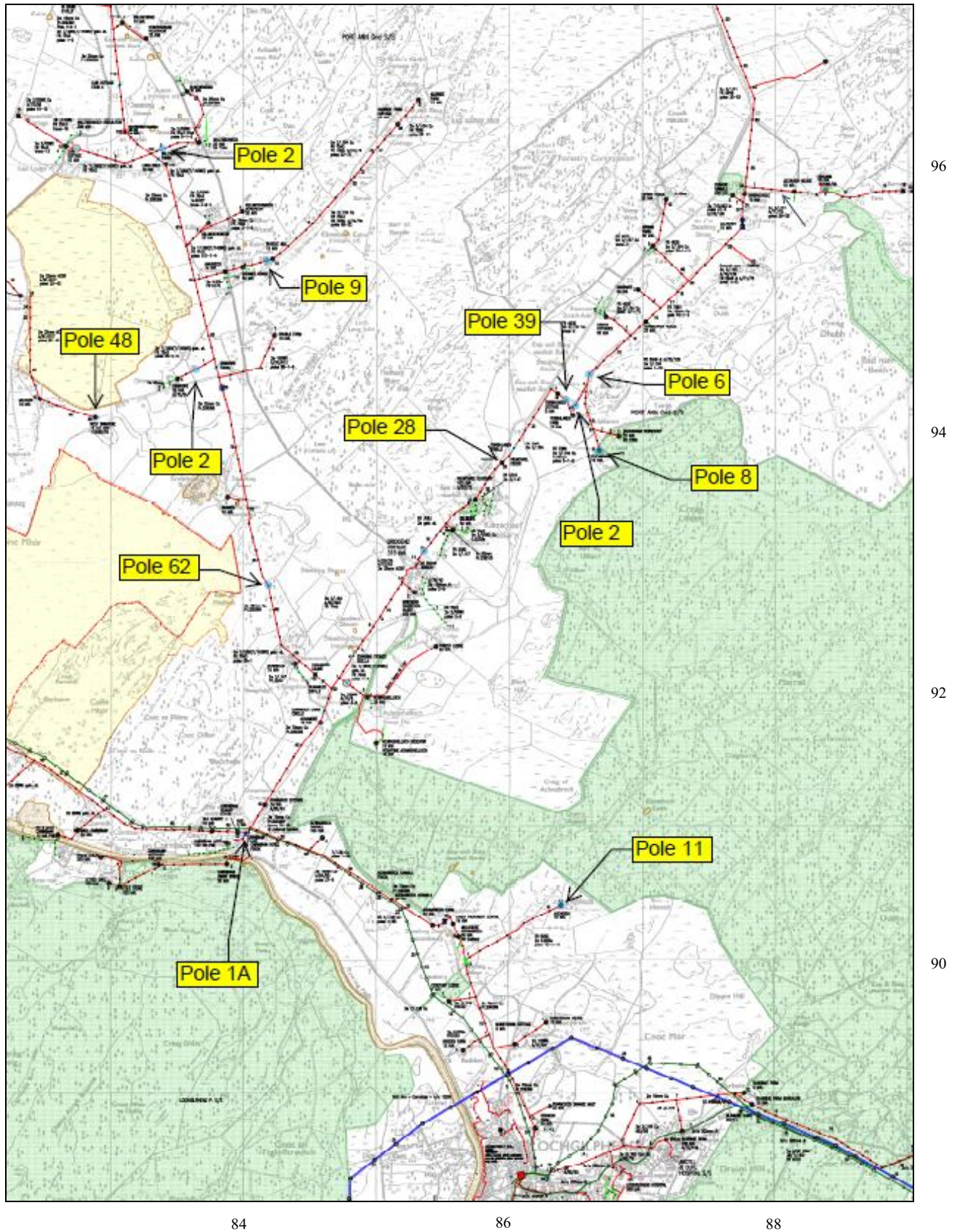
Sites and monuments are listed according to the numbers allocated by the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE), formerly the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), for example NR89NW 74. Where NRHE has not catalogued a site, the sites and monuments record of the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS), archaeological advisors to Argyll and Bute Council, is used, for example WoSASPin59894.

Where appropriate a site's Scheduled Monument number, for example SM186, is also included.

WATCHING BRIEFS FOR POLE REPLACEMENTS ON HV LINES

Most of these watching briefs consisted of monitoring the excavation of trenches for replacement poles and occasionally associated stays. Some poles were not in particularly sensitive locations although because of the programme of work, trenches at some of those places were also monitored.

MAP 1



Map 1 showing locations of poles scheduled to be replaced

Map 1 covers most of the Kilmartin valley between Lochgilphead and Kilmartin village where there is a high density of prehistoric sites. Much of this low-lying land, known as Moine Mhor, was once an inlet of the sea and is now a National Nature Reserve. Through it runs the meandering River Add into which flow the Kilmartin Burn and numerous drainage channels although much of the ground remains waterlogged. Moine Mhor is surrounded on its north, east and south sides by craggy slopes, mostly covered with coniferous forestry.

Pole 2 (Ballymeanoch)

Pole 2 is situated at NR 83395 96110 in a level pasture field close to a road known as 'the Long Walk' and within an area studded with archaeological sites. Approximately 150m to the south-east, at NR 8354 9603, is a low earthen mound, a cist burial (NR89NW 74), while a plain stone ball (NR89NW 72) was unearthed very close to the pole at NR 8343 9612.



*Standing stones NR89NW 14 with kerb cairn in the foreground.
Viewed from the east*

Some 200-300m north of the pole are located several important prehistoric sites, including four scheduled monuments: NR89NW 18 (SM176), consisting of a henge with cist burials at NR 83317 96277; barrow NR89NW 51 (SM3342) at NR 83522 96373; a group of standing stones NR89NW 14 (SM4301) at NR 8337 9641; and NR 89NW 40 (SM3749), a kerb cairn, at NR 83395 96429. Further sites exist within 400m to the west of the pole.

The trench for the new pole cut through 0.3m of mid-brown silty loam and underlying glacial till of orange gravel and pebbles, nothing of archaeological interest being uncovered

Pole 9

Pole 9 stands at NR 84184 95265, on a level shelf within sloping ground to the rear (west) of Rhudle Mill. Nothing of archaeological significance has been identified in its near vicinity.

The old pole was removed and the new one placed at the same location, its trench cutting through materials disturbed during the insertion of the old pole. Bedrock was reached at a depth of 0.3m, nothing of archaeological interest being uncovered.

Pole 48

There are no records of sites of archaeological interest near Pole 48, located adjacent to a drainage channel at the west edge of the garden of West Drimvore, at NR 82852 94119. The trench for the new pole was dug next to the old pole and measured 1.2m east/west by 0.8m wide and 1.6m deep. Other than some backfill from the old trench, it cut through 0.3m of mid-brown clayey topsoil and grey glacial clay which lay beneath it.

Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in this trench.



Old Pole 48 being dismantled

Pole 36 (Strathmore)

Although not originally designated for replacing and hence not highlighted on the map, Pole 36 was replaced during this operation. Located at NR 82412 94753, the old pole stood a short distance south of a house named Strathmore although on the opposite (left) bank of the Kilmartin Burn, in a waterlogged field.

No sites of archaeological significance have been identified near this location.

Initially, the trench measured 2m north/south by 0.8m wide and 1.6m deep, cutting through 0.2m of pale brown topsoil and underlying river gravels. Unfortunately, the nature of the subsoil resulted in the trench becoming rapidly waterlogged, its sides collapsing in several places. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were uncovered.

Pole 2 (Drimvore)

Pole 2 is located at NR 83623 94465, on a spur taking power to Drimvore 200m to the west. In 1960 a polished stone adze head (NR89SW 36) was discovered at NR 8347 9430, close to Drimvore. Otherwise, no known archaeological sites are located in the near vicinity of this pole.

The area around Pole 2 is low-lying and covered with coarse grass, reeds and patches of bracken with clumps of small trees, predominantly birch, rowan and oak. To accommodate a block at the base of the pole, the trench for the new pole measured 3m east/west by 0.8m wide and 1.6m deep, the old pole being removed from within it. The trench cut through 0.8m of dark brown, peaty soil and 0.8m of fine, pale brown sand, bottoming onto blue/grey clay of probable lacustrine origin. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in this trench.

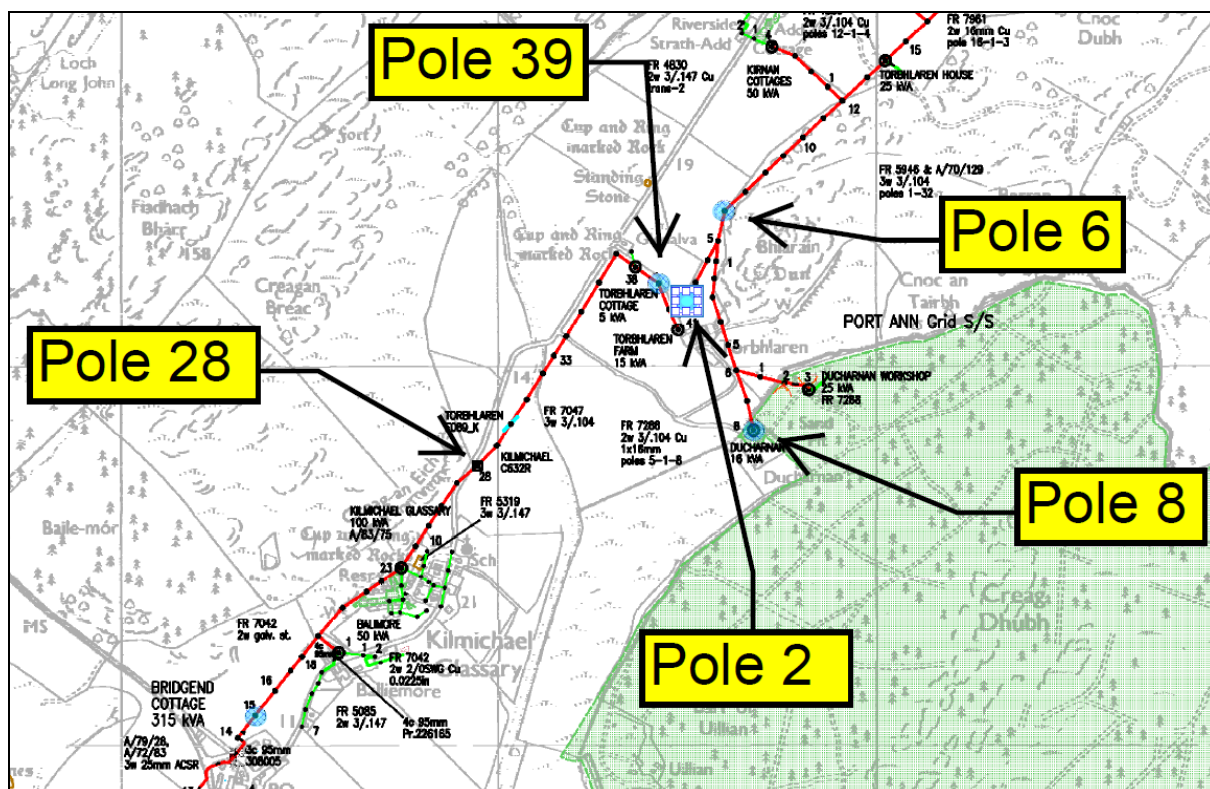


Trench for Pole 2 at Drimvore, viewed from the north

Pole 62

Pole 62 was not replaced at this time.

Several poles were changed a short distance to the north of the village of Kilmichael Glassary (see map below).



Area north of Kilmichael showing locations of Poles 2, 6, 8, 28 and 39

This part of the Kilmichael glen hosts several sites of archaeological importance particularly cup-marked and cup and ring-marked rocks. These include: NR89SE 25 at NR 8620 9430; NR89SE 11 at NR 8622 9438; and NR89SE 5 at NR 8635 9452. In addition, there is a standing stone (NR89SE 12) at NR 8607 9428, now used as a footbridge some 300m west of Pole 39; and another such stone (NR89SE 3, Scheduled Monument SM230) 300m north of Pole 39, at NR 8639 9449.

Another site of interest, dating from two millennia later than the prehistoric features listed above, is a dun (NR89SE 9) at NR 8668 9423, on a rocky knoll 200m north-east of Pole 2.

Pole 6

A close inspection of Pole 6 demonstrated that, although it had been identified as damaged, it proved to be perfectly sound and hence was not changed. However, an examination of Poles 35 and 36 showed them to be defective and so these two were replaced (see below).

Pole 39

Pole 39 stands at NR 86440 94225, on the sloping east side of the Kilmichael glen in waterlogged ground blanketed with reeds. The trench for the new pole measured 2m east/west by 0.8m wide and 1.6m deep and cut through 0.2m of pale brown, clayey loam over hill wash and glacial till of grey clay and boulders, some of them large.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were uncovered in this trench.

Pole 39 stay trench

A trench, measuring 3m east/west by 0.9m wide and 2m deep, for a stay for Pole 39 was dug 7m to the north of the pole. Topsoil was 0.4m deep here and overlay hill wash of pale brown clayey soil and boulders and underlying glacial till of grey and yellow clay.

Pole 2

Located at NR 86514 94193, 100m south-east of Pole 39 and upslope from it, Pole 2 stood in an area characterized by substantial outcrops of bedrock, one of which houses the dun (NR89SE 9) described above.

Although covered with reeds, this area was much drier than that around Pole 39. The trench, measuring 1.6m east/west by 0.7m wide and 1.6m deep, cut through 0.2m of pale orange-brown loam and underlying till of pale brown clay, gravel and pebbles with nothing of archaeological significance being found.



View northwards up the Kilmichael glen showing Pole 2 being erected

Pole 6

This pole was not replaced.

Pole 36

Located in a pasture field on the flat base of the valley at NR 86274 94225, Pole 36 was found to be defective during fieldwork. The trench for the new pole measured 1.6m east/west by 0.8m wide and 1.6m deep, cutting through a mere 0.1m of mid-brown loamy topsoil and underlying river gravels. No archaeological features were encountered in the trench.



View southwards down Kilmichael glen showing old Pole 36 and the trench for the new one just beyond

Pole 35

Another pole identified as defective during this programme of fieldwork, Pole 35 is located at NR 86244 94162, a short distance south of Pole 36 and some 25m from the road that runs through the glen.

The trench, measuring 1.6m north/south by 0.7m wide, cut through 0.2m of red-brown clayey topsoil, 0.5m of red-brown clay and underlying river gravel to a total depth of 1.6m. It became waterlogged at an early stage, excavation having penetrated the water table, this trench being on slightly lower ground than at Pole 36.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were uncovered.

Pole 8

Pole 8, located at NR 86683 93805, is a terminal pole adjacent to a drainage channel at the edge of the garden of Ducharnan Cottage. The old pole was removed during a power shut-down and the new pole inserted directly into the resulting hole. However, for logistical reasons, a small trench had to be excavated adjacent to that hole, revealing a stratigraphic sequence comprising 0.3m of mid-brown, clayey topsoil overlying blue-grey clay of glacial origin with no archaeological features being uncovered.

Pole 28

Pole 28 stands at NR 85957 93753, near the north edge of a pasture field adjacent to the road that runs through the Kilmichael glen. Some 250-300m to its south, at the north edge of the village of Kilmichael Glassary are three groups of cup and ring-marked rocks: NR89SE 1 at NR 8579 9349; NR89SE 17 at NR 8580 9356; and NR89SE 26 at NR 8580 9350.

The trench for the new pole measured 1.8m north/south by 0.8m wide and 1.9m deep, cutting through 0.2m of pale brown, clayey topsoil and glacial till of pale brown clay and pebbles that lay below.

Pole 1A

This pole was not monitored during its replacement.

Pole 11

This pole was not monitored during its replacement.

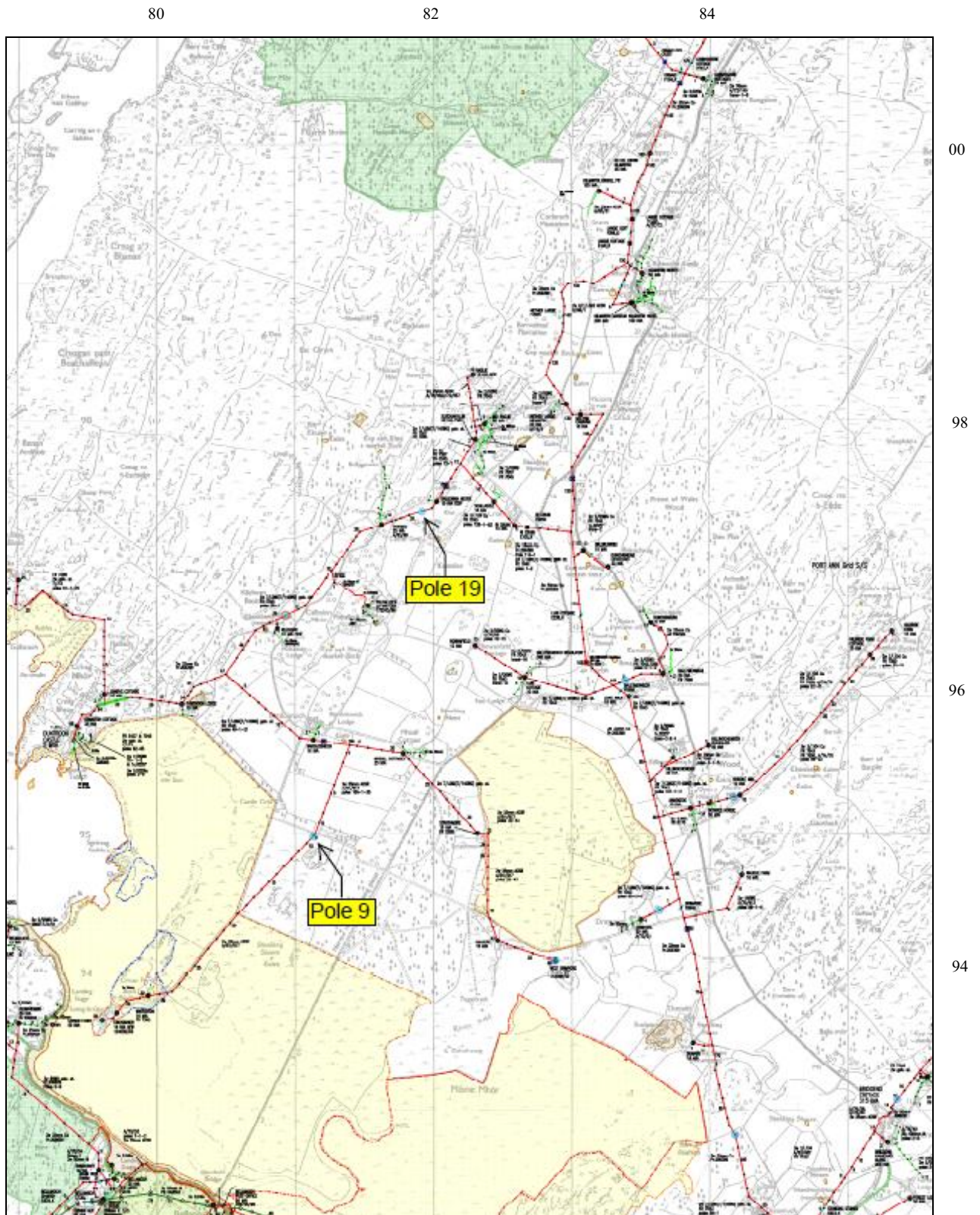
MAP 2

Only two poles on Map 2 were earmarked for replacing, Pole 9 at the north end of Moine Mhor and Pole 19 just south of Slockavullin.

Pole 9

Pole 9 is located at NR 81133 94981, in a flat, boggy field covered in coarse grass. It stands 200m north of a rocky knoll upon which stands an enclosure or possibly a dun (NR89SW 47) at NR 8113 9478.

The trench for the new pole measured 1.8m east/west by 0.8m wide and 1.6m deep. It cut through 0.2-0.3m of mid-brown, peaty soil and fine grey sand that lay beneath it with nothing of archaeological interest being revealed.



Map 2 showing locations of poles scheduled to be replaced

Pole 19

Old Pole 19 and trench for its replacement, viewed from the east

Pole 19 stands at NR 81920 97336, in a low-lying, boggy area covered with reeds and irises. Several important monuments have been identified 100-200m to its south and south-east comprising: standing stone NR89NW 35 at NR 8203 9723; cremation burial NR89NW 88 at NR 820 972; multi-phase settlement site NR89NW 11 at NR 8203 9719; long cist burial NR89NW 37 at NR 822 971; and four cists NR89NW 36 (SM225) at NR 8204 9714.

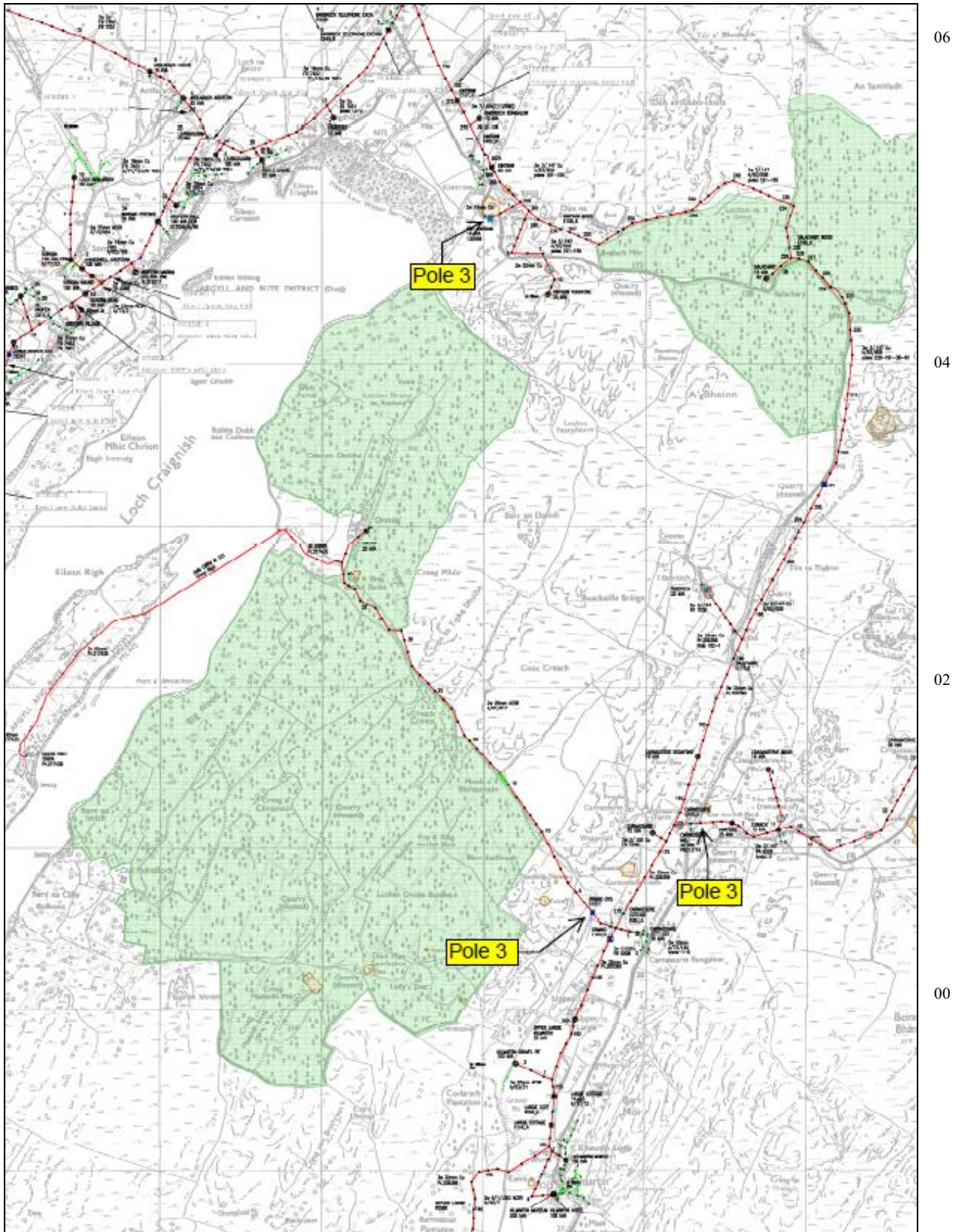
The trench for the new pole measured 2m east/west by 0.9m wide and 1.7m deep, cutting through 0.2m of mid-brown, clayey topsoil and underlying glacial till of grey clay and pebbles.

Nothing of archaeological interest was encountered in this trench.

MAP 3

82

84



Map 3 showing locations of poles scheduled to be replaced

The locations of three pole changes are shown on Map 3. Confusingly, they are all numbered Pole 3 but are distinguished here by their individual locations.

Pole 3 (Kintraw)

Excavations at this pole, located at NM 83062 04902, were monitored because of an important group of prehistoric monuments nearby. These are: NM80SW 1, a complex of three burial cairns and a standing stone; and a separate cairn, NM80SW 36. Collectively they comprise a single Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM210), centred on NM 83046 04974.

Pole 3 is located at NM 83062 04902, on the edge of a pasture field on the opposite side of the A816 road from the scheduled area and barely 20m from it. It proved possible to place the new pole in the hole vacated by the old one, thus obviating the need for any excavation.

Pole 4 (Carnasserie Farm)

Although Map 3 shows Pole 3 near Carnasserie Farm to be the defective one, there had been some confusion over numbering and it was actually Pole 4 that was replaced. It is located at NM 84416 01170, on an elevated ridge within a pasture field. It stands close to two known sites: a cup-marked rock (NM80SW 25), a short distance to the north at NM 8444 0121; and a gun emplacement (NM80SW 47), in a wooded area at the top of a slope at NM 8443 0114.

The trench for the new pole, which was placed immediately adjacent to the old one, measured 1.8m east/west by 0.8m wide and 1.6m deep. It cut through 0.3m of pale brown, clayey topsoil and underlying glacial deposits of pale brown clay, grey gravel and pale grey shattered rock.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were uncovered.

Pole 3 (Carnasserie Castle)

Pole 3 stands near the top of the slope on the west side of the Kilmartin valley, near three scheduled monuments: a denuded burial cairn (NM80SW 21/SM186) some 300m to its east at NM 8338 0067; two standing stones (NM80SW 22/SM187) 300m to the north-east at NM 8345 0078; and 16th-century Carnasserie (NM80SW 2/SM90061) 300m to the north at NM 83908 00848.

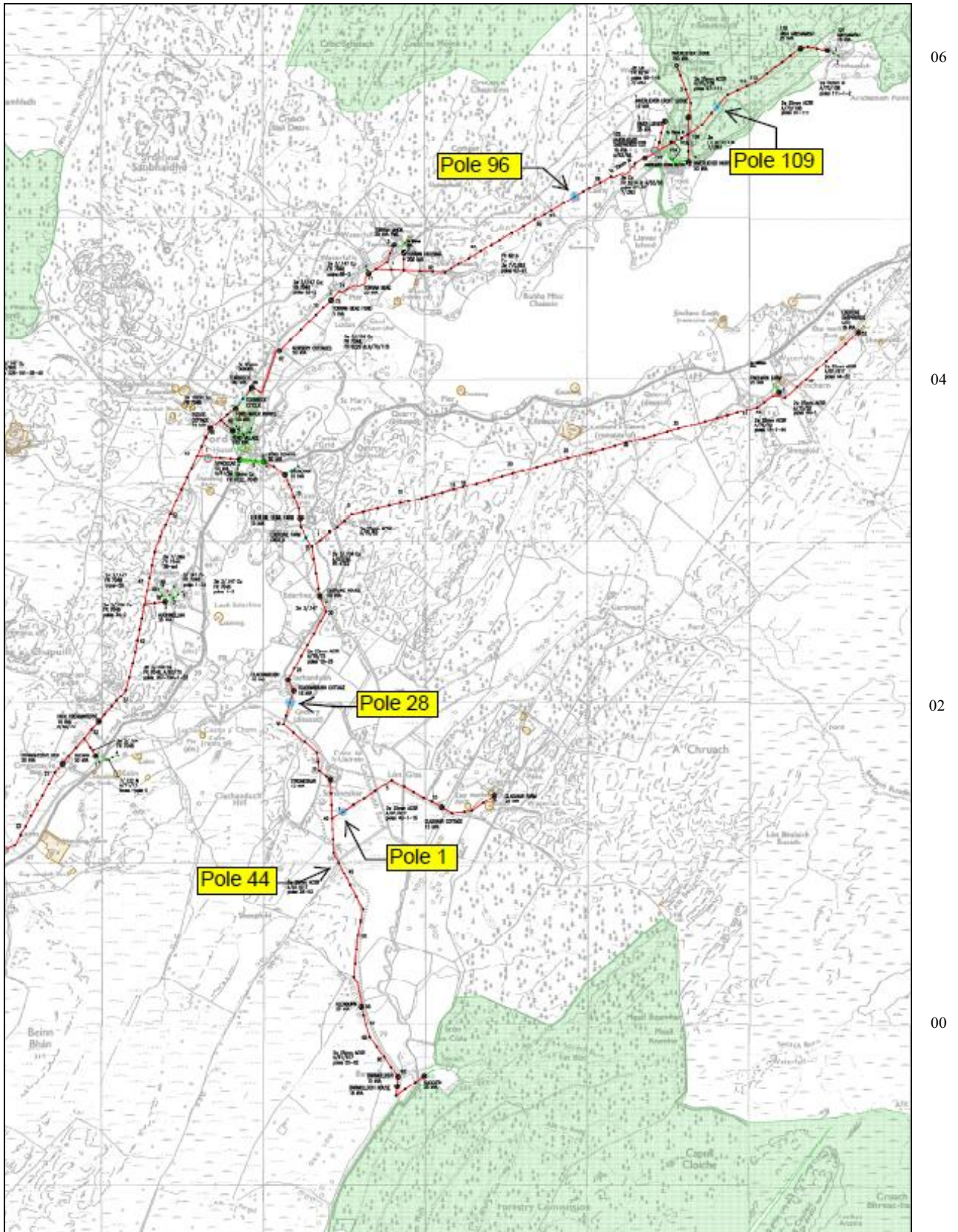
The trench for the new pole, at NM 83683 00595, was excavated directly over the hole for the old one and measured 1.3m east/west by 0.7m wide and 1.6m deep. Other than the backfill from the earlier pole, it cut through 0.2m of pale brown clayey topsoil and underlying glacial till of pale brown clay with some pebbles and boulders. Nothing of archaeological interest was exposed in this trench.

MAP 4

86

88

90



Map 4 showing locations of poles scheduled to be replaced

Map 4 shows two groups of poles near the west end of Loch Awe: Poles 28, 1 and 44 at 2-3km south of the village of Ford; and Poles 96 and 109 some 3-4km to its north-east, near the north shore of the loch.

Pole 28

This pole is located at NM 87171 01998, in a level field of poor quality pasture covered with coarse grass and reeds. The field is close to the presumed site of a battle between Alasdair MacCholla and local levies in 1647.

The trench for the new pole, 2m north of the old one, measured 2m north/south by 0.7m wide and cut through 0.3m of mid-brown silty soil and 0.7m of glacial till of pale brown clay and pebbles which sat directly on bedrock. Nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered.

Pole 1

The nearest site of archaeological interest to Pole 1 consists of the remains of a boundary bank (WoSASPin59894) at NM 87165 00493, some 500m to the south-west.

Situated on a rocky knoll covered with coarse grass and reeds at NM 87569 00804, the trench for Pole 1's replacement was excavated through 0.6m of dark brown, peaty soil which lay directly on bedrock. The old pole had been struck by lightning, necessitating its replacement. Ground water flooded the trench which contained nothing of archaeological significance.



Old Pole 1 showing the result of lightning strike, viewed from the south

Flooded trench for new Pole 1, viewed from the north

Pole 44

Although there are no known sites of archaeological importance in the near vicinity of Pole 44, operational circumstances allowed the excavation of the trench for the new pole to be monitored archaeologically.

Pole 44 stands in boggy, low-lying ground at the foot of a grassy knoll, at NM 87487 01305. The trench measured 2m east/west by 0.8m wide and 1.6m deep, cutting through dark peaty soil which bottomed onto grey clay at the base of the trench. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were uncovered.

Poles 96 and 109

These poles were not changed during this operation.

WATCHING BRIEFS AT SPARK GAP TRENCHES

With a few exceptions, the trenches dug to accommodate copper earth wires were 25-30m long. The exceptions were those where the ground was particularly stony and the electrical resistance could be reduced to an acceptable level (below 10 ohms) only by extending the cable over a larger distance and/or connecting it to copper rods pressed into the ground. Mention of trench length will only be given where it exceeded 30m.

Trenches were typically 0.8m wide and 0.5m deep.

MAP 1

Trench at Pole 4

At NR 8582 8904, on the northern edge of Lochgilphead and some 250m west of Pole 4, were found the remains of a cist burial (NR88NE 17) included a highly decorated cist slab.

Pole 4 stood on a hillside at NR 86080 88993 from where the trench ran downhill to the north-west through the waterlogged edge of a field of rough pasture. It cut through 0.3m of mid-brown, silty topsoil and underlying glacial till of orange gravel and pebbles. No features of archaeological significance were uncovered and the only artefacts retrieved from the trench were of recent date, comprising a few sherds of white china and clear bottle glass.

Trench at Pole 49

A chambered cairn (NR89SW 22/SM11053) is located at NR 84572 91925, some 60m to the south-west of Pole 49 while 200m to its south-east, at NR 8479 9188, is standing stone NR89SW 54.

The pole stood at NR 84649 91954, in boggy ground at the edge of a level pasture field and adjacent to a drainage ditch, the trench running southwards from the pole (see photograph below).

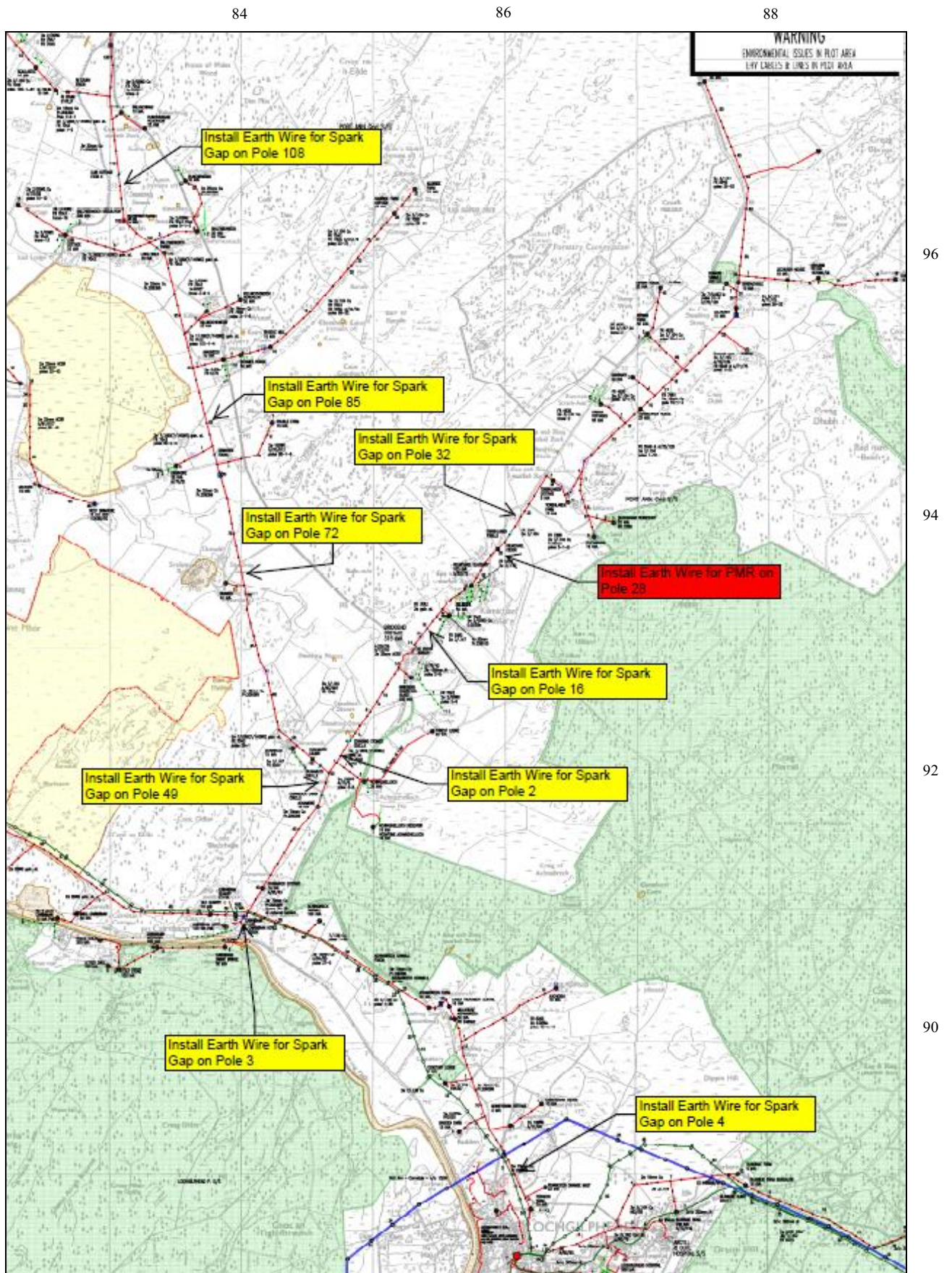
Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered in this trench.



Chambered cairn NR89SW 22 viewed from the south



Pole 49 and the earth wire trench viewed from the south



Map 1 showing locations of spark gap trenches

Trench at Pole 2

Pole 2 stands at NR 84753 92180 in a reasonably level pasture field. Approximately 180m to its north-east are the remains of two large burial cairns (NR89SW 29 at NR 8480 9230) and two standing stones (NR89SW 24 at NR 8483 9232), all collectively classed as scheduled monument SM198. In addition, the remains of two burial cists (collectively NR89SW 26) have been identified some 350m to the north-east of the pole, at NR 8491 9236.

The trench ran eastward from the pole as far as the field boundary fence, cutting through mid-brown silty loam, 0.2m deep along most of its length but 0.4m deep at the fence. No archaeological features were uncovered in this trench.

Trench at Pole 20

The original intention was to excavate a trench at Pole 16, as is shown on the map. However, discussions with the landowner meant that the trench was transferred to Pole 20, a short distance to the north-east. There are no known sites near this pole.

Pole 20 stands at NR 85482 93258 on an elevated ridge on the edge of a hay field, recently cropped, midway between the villages of Bridgend and Kilmichael Glassary. The trench ran north-eastwards from the pole through 0.4-0.5m of pale brown, sandy topsoil which included some small stones. This material, which was hard-packed because of sustained dry conditions at the time, gave onto glacial till of orange sand with gravel, small stones and occasional larger boulders.

Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in this trench.



Trench at Pole 20, viewed from the north-east

Trench at Pole 36

There are no known sites of archaeological significance near Pole 36 (trench originally intended for Pole 32) at NR 86274 94225. The trench ran south-east of the pole through 0.2m of mid-brown loam with gravel and pebbles over glacial till of gravel and pebbles.

Trench at Pole 72



Pole 72 with Dunadd Fort beyond, viewed from the east

Pole 72 stands within a level, somewhat waterlogged pasture field near the edge of Moine Mhor and 300m east of Dunadd Fort (NR89SW 1/SM90108) which sits atop a large rock outcrop forming a very prominent and famous local landmark. Some 130m south-west of Pole 72, at NR 8396 9344, is standing stone NR89SW 25, now recumbent although still upright in 1867. There is another standing stone (NR89SW 35) at NR 8386 9361, 200m to the north-west. These monuments lie to the west of the River Add while the pole stands to its east.

Running northwards from the pole, the trench cut through dark, sandy and slightly peaty topsoil, up to 0.5m deep, and pale brown sand which lay beneath it, revealing nothing of archaeological significance.

Trench at Pole 85

No sites of archaeological significance have been identified close to this pole which stands at NR 83736 94698, in a field of rough pasture covered with short grass and reeds and waterlogged in places.

The trench ran eastwards from the pole through 0.3-0.4m of dark grey-brown sandy loam and underlying fine sand varying in colour from yellow to grey. Nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered in this trench.



Trench at Pole 85 showing copper earth wire and attached copper rods, viewed from the west

Trench at Pole 108

Pole 108 stands at NR 83093 96476, near the south edge of a pasture field just east of the B8025 Kilmartin to Tayvallich road. The nearest known site of archaeological interest is an assemblage of worked flints and other lithics (NR89NW 114), probably dating to the late Neolithic, found some 100m to the south-west of the pole. Approximately 200m to the east of the pole, at NR 8328 9651, is a probable field clearance cairn (NR89NW 50).

The trench ran westwards along the southern edge of the field, through 0.2-0.3m of dark brown topsoil and underlying glacial till of grey and orange clay with stones. Nothing of interest was found in this trench.

Trench at Pole 3

No trench was excavated adjacent to this pole.

Trench at Pole 28

No trench was excavated adjacent to this pole.

MAP 2

Pole 128

No trench was excavated at Pole 128.

Trench at Pole 149

Pole 149 stands in a level pasture field 400m west of the village of Kilmartin and in the near vicinity of some important ancient monuments. The nearest of these is a burial mound known as the 'Glebe Cairn' NR89NW 9/SM90183), situated some 150m to the south of the pole at NR 83300 98930. Another cairn (NR89NW 28) is located a similar distance north-west of the pole, at NR 8321 9920. However, it is not clear whether this monument is a burial mound or simply a field clearance cairn.

The trench ran southwards from the pole through waterlogged ground, the trench filling with water as soon as it was open. It cut through dark brown silty loam although the base of the trench remained totally masked by the water and no archaeological assessment was possible.

Trench at Pole 168

Located at NM 83794 00413 in a pasture field on gently sloping ground on the west side of the Kilmartin valley, Pole 168 stands some 160m south-west of a cup-marked rock (NM80SW 30) at NM 8395 0050 and a burial cist (NM80SW 23) at NM 8391 0050 which had been emptied prior to its proper investigation in 1971.

The trench ran northwards from the pole, through 0.3-0.4m of grey-brown silty loam with pebbles and some larger stones and underlying glacial till of orange gravel, pebbles and boulders. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered.

Trench at Pole 3

Pole 3 stands high up on the west side of the Kilmartin valley at NM 83683 00595, near three scheduled monuments: a denuded burial cairn (NM80SW 21/SM186) 300m to the east at NM 8338 0067; two standing stones (collectively NM80SW 22/SM187) 300m to the north-east at NM 8345 0078; and 16th-century Carnasserie Castle (NM80SW 2/SM90061), 300m to the north, at NM 83908 00848.

The earth wire trench was excavated through a mere 0.1m of pale brown, clayey topsoil and glacial till of grey and orange clay and bedrock, the trench extending to the south-west from the pole. No features or finds of archaeological interest were encountered.

MAP 3

Pole 4

Although the map 3 shows Pole 3 to be the defective one, there had been some confusion over numbering and trenching was actually at Pole 4. It is located on an elevated ridge within a pasture field, at NM 84416 01170, and close to two known sites of archaeological interest. A short distance to the north of the pole, at NM 8444 0121, is a cup-marked rock (NM80SW 25) and, in a wooded area at the top of a slope at NM 8443 0114, are the remains of a 20th-century observation post and gun emplacement (NM80SW 47).

The trench, which ran to the east from the pole, cut through 0.3m of pale brown, silty loam and underlying orange-brown gravel of glacial origin. Nothing of archaeological significance was found in the trench.

Pole 194

Pole 194 stands at NM 84652 02412, on a level platform to the immediate east of the A816 Lochgilphead to Oban road. It stands 150m north-east of a kiln (NM80SW 67) identified at NM 8455 0224 in 1999.

The area adjacent to the pole had been heavily disturbed during the construction of a forestry road although the trench ran through ground that had not been touched. The trench cut through 0.3m of grey-brown, clayey soil with stones and underlying glacial till of orange and grey clay together with shattered bedrock, nothing of archaeological interest being uncovered.

Pole 208

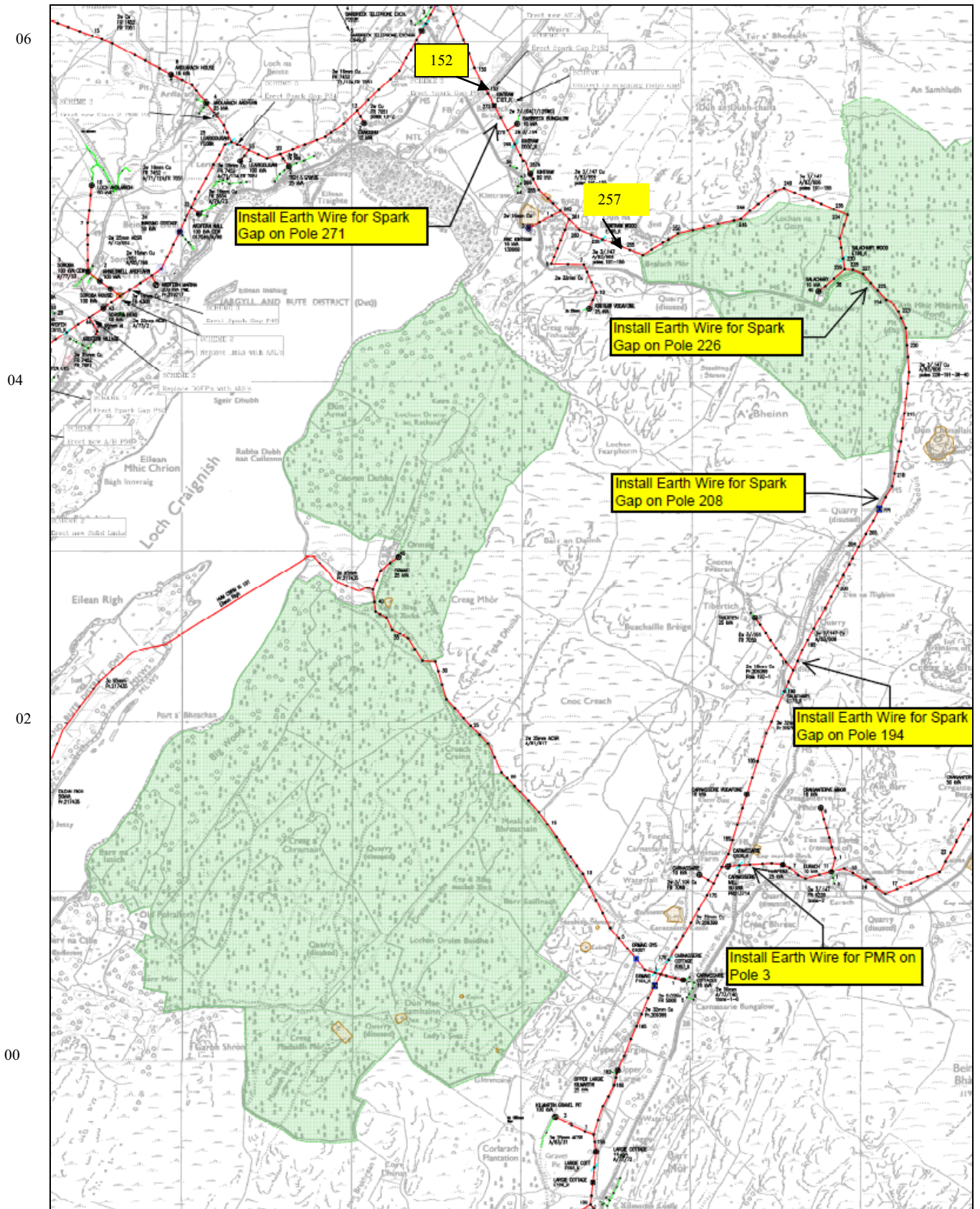
Pole 208 stands at NM 85111 03312, some 500m south-west of Dun Chonallaich, a late prehistoric fort (NM80SE 15/SM5473), atop a rocky crag at NM 8544 0365. It is also 500m north-east of Dun na Nighinn (NM80SW 27) at NM 8491 0282.

The pole and its associated trench were located within low-lying ground surrounded by rocky crags. The trench ran southwards from the pole through waterlogged peat, revealing no features of archaeological significance.

Pole 226

Standing at NM 85053 04577, Pole 226 is located some 350m north-west of a burial cairn (NM80SE 22), at NM 8525 0434, which was disturbed during road building in circa 1854.

From the pole the spark gap trench ran to the north-west through rough ground by the side of the A816 road through shallow topsoil of pale-brown clayey loam and orange-brown glacial clay and boulders. It had to be extended for some 80m because of the stony nature of the ground and proximity of bedrock. Nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered.



Map 3 showing locations of spark gap trenches

Pole 257***Pole 257 with its trench curving downhill to the south-east***

Although not shown on Map 3, Pole 257 was included in this programme. The pole stands at NM 83547 04823, on undulating rough pasture between rocky crags and boggy hollows. The largest of the crags in this area is Bealach Mor (Kintraw Hill) upon which stands the remains of a very large fort known as Dun na Ban-oige (NM80SW 15) at NM 8377 0493, probably an early historic dun some 250m north-west of Pole 257.

The rocky nature of the ground and the proximity of bedrock in parts of the trench meant that the trench had to be 80m long, running south and south-eastwards down the slope from the pole, terminating at NM 83533 04782 in waterlogged ground. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered.

Pole 271

Pole 271 stands at NM 82880 05528, in a level field of good pasture 250m from the Kintraw Burn and 500m east of the head of Loch Craignish. No sites of archaeological or historical significance have been identified in the near vicinity of the pole.

The trench ran to the north-east from the pole, through 0.2-0.3m of mid-brown topsoil and glacial till of orange and grey sand and gravel. Nothing of archaeological interest was found.

Pole 152 (Kilmelfort line)

This pole is numbered according to its position on the Kilmelfort overhead line which, at this point, joins the north/south line that runs northwards from Lochgilphead. It stands towards the north end of a pasture field at NM 82802 05674, a short distance from the Kintraw Burn.

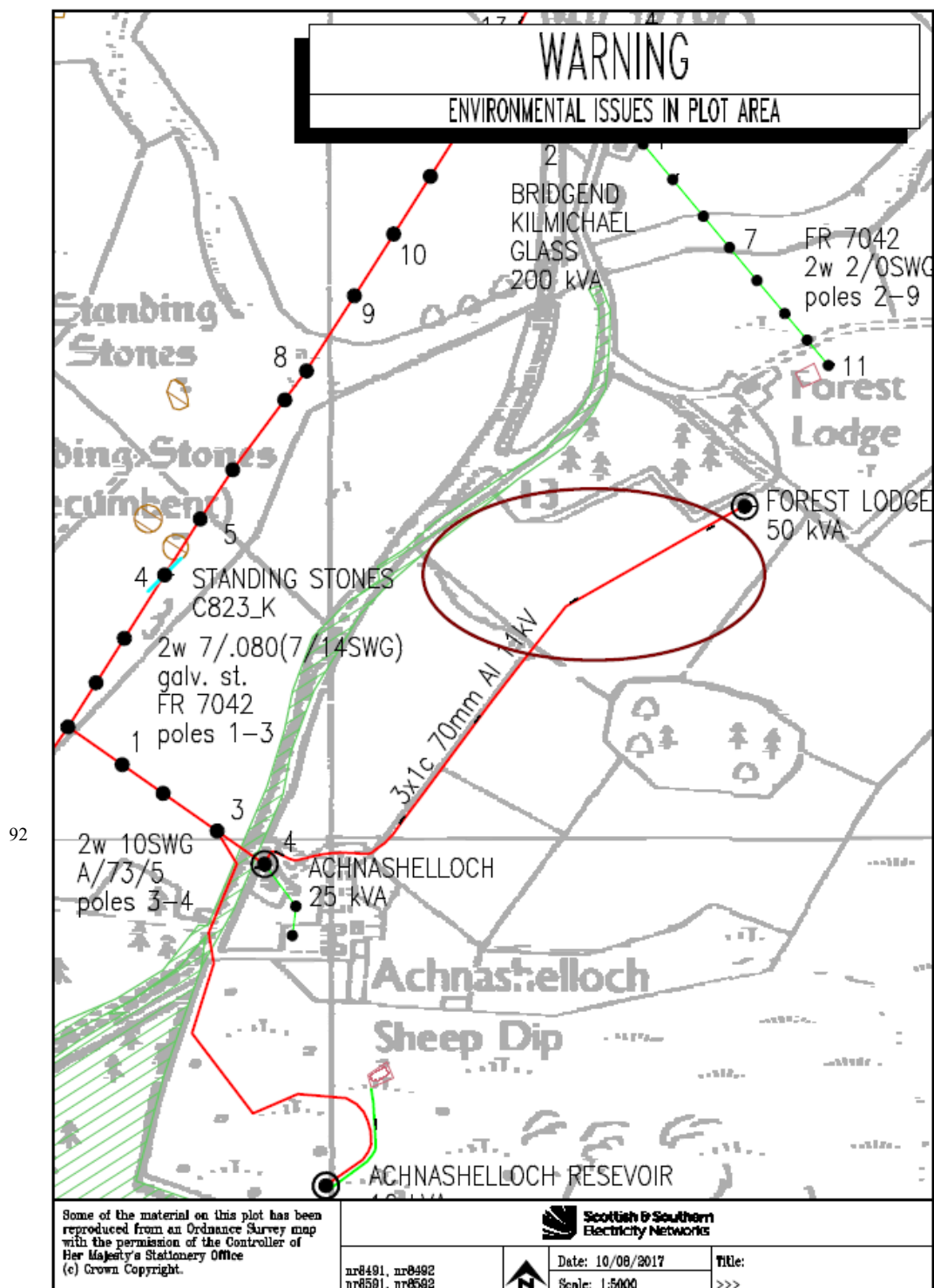


Trench at Pole 152 viewed from the west

The trench ran to the north as far as a field boundary wall before returning north-eastwards alongside the wall (see photograph above) over a total length of 50m. It cut through 0.1-0.2m of dark brown loam and underlying gravel and grey sand, nothing of archaeological significance being uncovered.

TRENCH TO EE MAST AT ACHNASHELLOCH

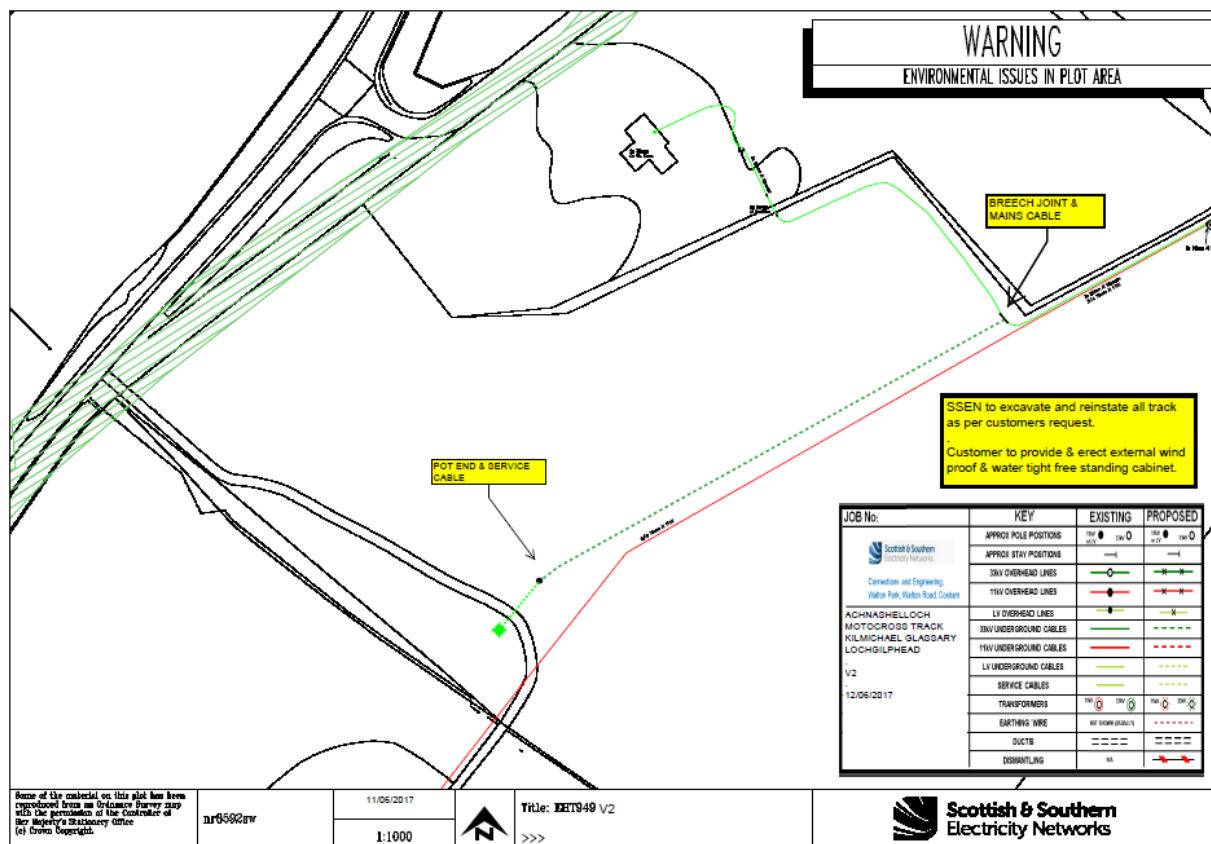
85



Location of trench for EE mast at Achnashelloch

This part of the report describes the results of a watching brief undertaken on 12 and 13 March 2018 a short distance north of Achnashelloch Farm, 3km north of Lochgilphead. It was carried out during the excavation of a trench to accommodate a low voltage power

supply to a new EE mast. The location of the investigations is shown on the map above and the course of the trench on the map below.



Map showing the route of the cable trench at Achnashelloch

Existing underground cables in the vicinity are represented on the map above by unbroken lines, red depicting high voltage and green low voltage. The route of the new cable is shown as a broken green line. It ran from NR 85386 92345, where it connected with an existing underground line to Alder House, south-westwards to NR 85219 92237, at an external meter cabinet connected to the new EE mast. The overall length of the trench was approximately 200m.

On the level plain to the south-west and west of Achnashelloch are several important prehistoric monuments. To the south-west of the trench are the remains of a chambered cairn (NR89SW 22/SM11053) at NR 8457 9192 and standing stone NR89SW 54 at NR 8479 9188. A little further to the north and some 400m west of the trench are several prehistoric monuments: two cist burials (NR89SW 26) at NR 8491 9236; the remains of two or perhaps three cairns (NR89SW 29/SM198) at NR 8489 9231; two standing stones (collectively NR89SW 24/SM198) at NR 8483 9232; and two standing stones (NR89SW 27/SM200) at NR 8483 9248).



View to the north-west from Achnashelloch, showing standing stones NR89SW 27



The north-east half of the trench

The cable trench ran across land that sloped gently down to the west towards the floor of the Kilmartin valley, crossing ground covered with reeds and frequently waterlogged. It measured 0.5m wide and 0.6m deep, cutting through dark brown, peaty topsoil with some pebbles and boulders. The trench was 0.2-0.4m deep along most of its length but, where the ground was particularly wet, it extended beyond the base of the trench.

Topsoil overlay glacial till of grey and yellow clay and gravel with small stones and boulders, some of them large. The till tended to be soft where the ground was particularly wet and much harder where water does not penetrate into the clay.



The south-west end of the trench with the new mast in the middle distance

No features of archaeological significance were uncovered in this trench and the only artefacts retrieved from it were a few fragments of ceramic field drain and a single sherd of white china, none of which was retained.