

Scotia Archaeology

**REPORT
TO
SCOTTISH & SOUTHERN
ELECTRICITY NETWORKS**

**OVERHEAD LINE DISMANTLING,
BERTHA PARK
PERTH**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF**

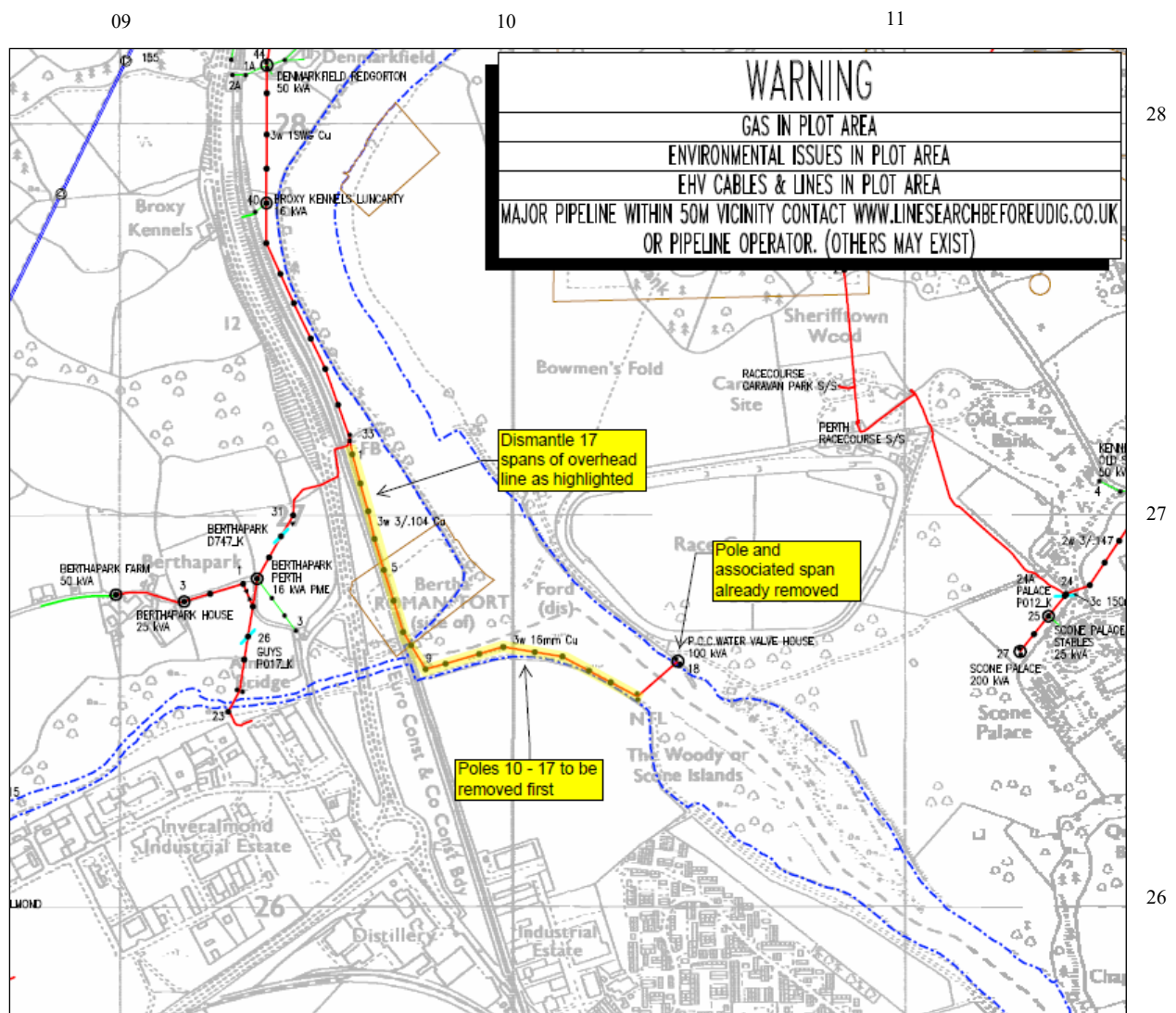
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INTRODUCTION

This document describes the results of a series of archaeological watching briefs undertaken by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology during the removal of several poles that had supported a now defunct overhead power line on the north side of Perth. The work was commissioned by Duncan McLean, Wayleave Department, Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN).

THE SITE



Map showing locations of Poles 1-17

The redundant line, highlighted in yellow on the above map (supplied by SSEN) ran roughly north/south along the west side of the River Tay, close to the Inveralmond roundabout which links Perth with the A9 trunk road. In all, 17 poles were due for demolition although only numbers 10 to 17 were the subject of this phase of the project. They all lay on the edge of Bertha Park, an area due for development as an industrial estate.

To the north of the site, and separated from it by the River Almond where it debouches into the Tay, are the remains of Bertha Roman Fort which is centred on NO 0974 2680. Its catalogue number ascribed by the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) is NO02NE 25;

it is also accorded Scheduled Monument status (monument number SM2403). The fort, which is believed to have been occupied during the Antonine period as well as the Flavian, is visible as a roughly rectangular enclosure defined mainly by the remains of ramparts on its north-west and south-west sides.

There are ditches within the undergrowth around the current area of investigation suggesting that there may have been an enclosure in this area although this has yet to be confirmed. However, during the 18th century several large cremation urns were discovered on the north side of this area, indicating that there had been a cremation cemetery, perhaps associated with the Roman fort there, although no further details of these finds are known.

The locations of the individual poles are given below.

Pole 10	NO 09846 26618
Pole 11	NO 09912 26643
Pole 12	NO 09982 26668
Pole 13	NO 10036 26662
Pole 14	NO 10108 26651
Pole 15	NO 10187 26605
Pole 16	NO 10249 26575
Pole 17	NO 10323 26533

THE WATCHING BRIEFS

Poles 10-17 were removed on 23 October 2018, a dry and intermittently sunny day. This operation was monitored in the belief that the removal of the poles would require trenches to be excavated around their bases. Although such ground-breaking activities would probably disturb only materials redeposited during the erection of the poles, watching briefs were considered worthwhile on two counts. First, trenching might encroach into deposits not touched during the line installation; second, even disturbed materials might include importance evidence such as ceramics and human remains associated with the putative cremation cemetery.

However, it proved possible in every case to remove the poles without the need for further excavation. Poles 11 and 12 were removed by lifting them directly out of the ground while the remainder were sawn off at their bases. This was carried out in two stages. Initially, they were held by a grab attached to a mechanical excavator and cut approximately 1m above ground level (see photograph below), the pole being removed by the machine and then the stump cut level with the ground.

Pole 17 was an H-pole from where the line had formerly spanned the River Tay to a terminal H-pole on the opposite bank at Scone Racecourse.



Pole 14 being cut 1m above ground



Dismantling metalwork on Pole 17

CONCLUSIONS

The method by which the poles were removed obviated any need for archaeological intervention during this operation. If possible, it would be desirable to adopt this method when removing Poles 1-9, several of which are located within the Roman fort to the north of the River Almond.