

Scotia Archaeology

**REPORT
TO
SCOTTISH & SOUTHERN
ELECTRICITY NETWORKS**

**OVERHEAD LINE REFURBISHMENT
AT NEWMILL, STANLEY, PERTSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEFS
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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of archaeological watching briefs undertaken in February 2019 for Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) during the excavation of trenches to accommodate new poles and earth wires on an existing overhead power line at Newmill Cottages, near Stanley, Perthshire. The work was carried out because of the proximity of the poles to the proposed route of a new stretch of dual carriageway on the A9 trunk road.

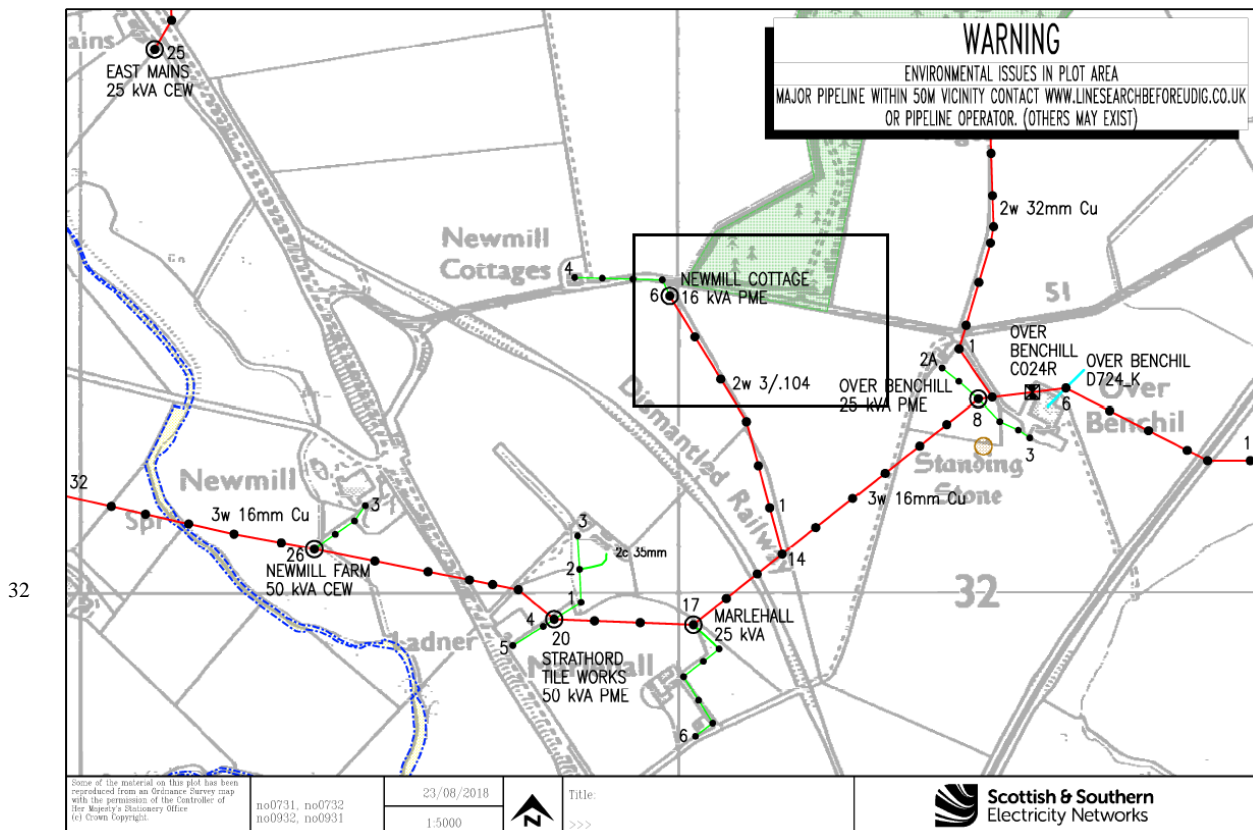
THE SITE

The area of investigation is located within level fields given over to arable farming, some of the fields having been harvested for potatoes and others ploughed. The line straddles Benchil Road, a local road leading from the A9 to the village of Stanley.

An overhead power line spur runs northwards to Pole 6 which supports a transformer converting the line from a high voltage (HV) one to one of low voltage (LV), supplying Newmill Cottages, some 150m to the west. The HV and LV lines are shown as red and green, respectively, on the map below. The construction of a new carriageway for the A9 has meant that Pole 6 and its transformer had to be moved southwards a short distance. In addition, Pole 7 was replaced with a new pole to which two stays and two earth wires (one HV and one LV) were attached.

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Location of site (map supplied by SSEN)

The watching briefs were undertaken because of the proximity of several known sites of archaeological significance. These sites are listed below, using catalogue numbers ascribed by the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE).

NO03SE 46

A small ring-ditch was identified from aerial photography at NO 0859 3250, some 500m west of Pole 6.

NO03SE 13

A souterrain was discovered during excavations for gravel at NO 0846 3238, 550m west of the pole. A domed quernstone (NO03SE 21) was also found nearby.

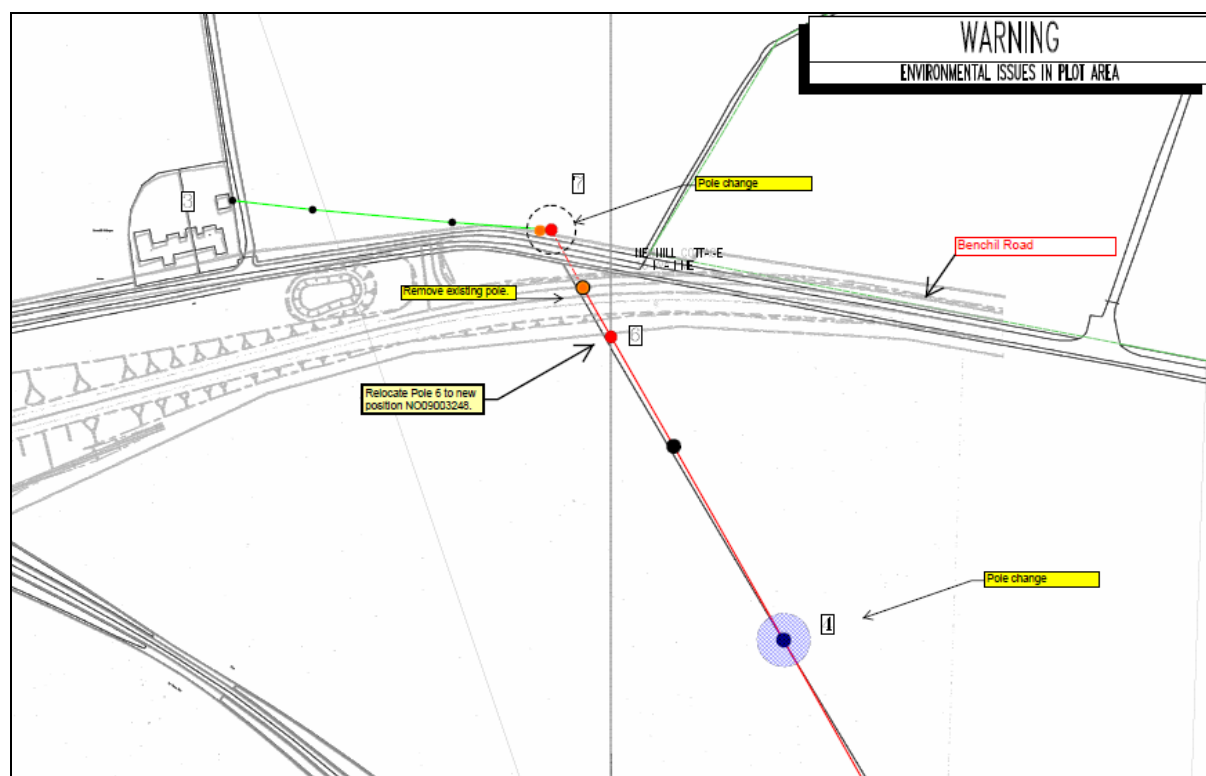
NO03SE 48

Aerial photography identified what appears to be a pit alignment between NO 0863 3264 and NO 0874 3265, 450m north-west of the site.

NO03SE 71

A possible palisaded settlement, together with pits, rig agriculture and other cropmarks have been revealed by aerial photography at NO 0928 3205, 450m south-east of Pole 6.

THE WATCHING BRIEFS



Detail of pole locations (map supplied by SSEN)

Monitoring was undertaken by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology on 12 February 2019, during dry, relatively mild weather.

Pole 6

New Pole 6 was inserted at NO 09001 32480, hard against a fence at the eastern edge of a field. Its trench measured 1.5m north/south by 0.5m wide and 1.6m deep, cutting through 0.3m of dark brown ploughsoil and underlying glacial deposits of gravel, pebbles and red-brown, silty sand.

Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered in this trench.

Pole 7

The extant Pole 7, at NO 08977 32526, was located at the southern edge of a ploughed field, close to the side of Benchil Road. It was replaced with a new one, its trench cutting through backfill from two earlier poles and a small area of undisturbed ground directly beneath the hedge that forms the field boundary.

The trench, measuring 1.5m north-east/south-west by 0.7m wide and 1.6m deep, contained nothing of archaeological interest.



View from the east of Pole 7 being replaced

Pole 7 Stay Trench 1

A new stay was installed 7m east of Pole 7, its trench measuring 2m north/south by 0.7m wide and 2m deep. It cut through 0.2m of mid-brown topsoil and underlying glacial deposits of pebbles, gravel and pale brown, silty sand. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were uncovered in this trench.

Pole 7 Stay Trench 2

Another stay was installed 4m north-west of Pole 7, its trench measuring 2m east/west by 0.7m wide and 2m deep. It cut through 0.3m of mid-brown topsoil and underlying glacially deposited pebbles and silty sand. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered.



Stay Trench 2, viewed from the west

Pole 7 Earth Wire Trench 1

Two trenches to accommodate earth wires were excavated from Pole 7, one for the HV and one for the LV lines. Each trench measured 0.7m wide and 0.6m deep.

Trench 1 (HV) ran 20m eastwards from the pole, cutting through 0.3-0.5m of topsoil and underlying glacial deposits. The increase in depth of topsoil at this point was due to recent disturbance, this material containing large amounts of plastic and other recent artefacts.

Pole 7 Earth Wire Trench 2

This trench (LV) ran westwards from the pole for 25m, through similar material to that in Earth Wire Trench 1.



View, from the west, of Earth Wire Trench 2

CONCLUSIONS

Although nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in and no pre-modern artefacts recovered from any of these trenches, it is clear from the proximity of several known prehistoric sites that there is a distinct possibility of unearthing further archaeological features in the vicinity of Newton Cottages.