

Scotia Archaeology

**REPORT
TO
SCOTTISH & SOUTHERN
ELECTRICITY NETWORKS**

**UNDERGROUND POWER SUPPLY
TO WOODSIDE, SHISKINE,
ISLE OF ARRAN**

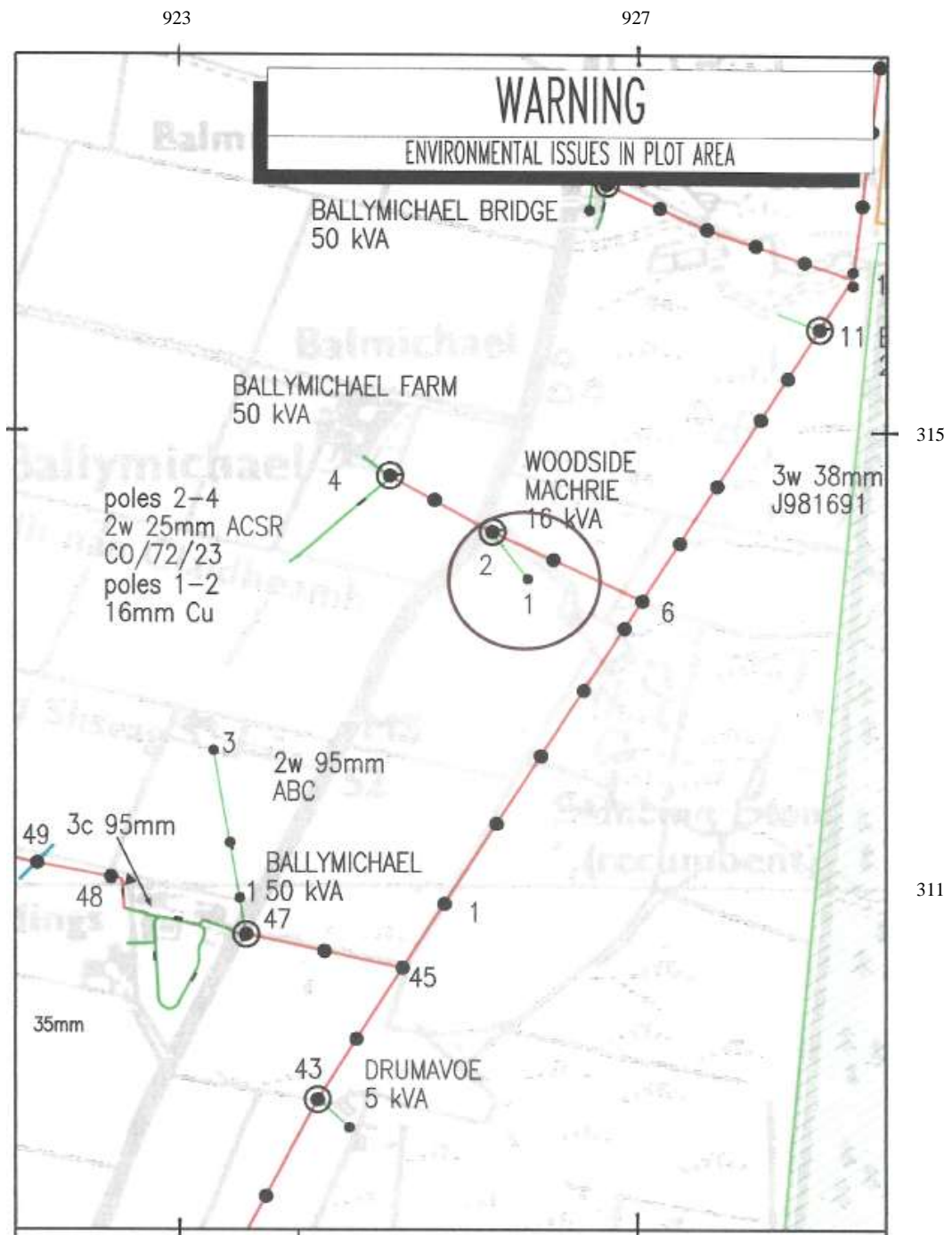
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF
JUNE 2019**

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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken in June 2019 for Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) during the excavation of a trench to accommodate an underground power supply to replace an overhead one at Woodside, near Shiskine on the Isle of Arran. Trenching was carried out by a local contractor while the work was monitored by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology.

THE SITE



Location of works, circled

Woodside is a small, private residence, 2km north-east of Shiskine and 4.5km north-east of the village of Blackwaterfoot in the south-west corner of Arran. It stands to the east of the B880 Brodick to Blackwaterfoot road, known locally as The String Road. On the opposite side of the road is the farm of Ballymichael.

A location map of the site, supplied by SSEN, is shown above.

Several sites of archaeological significance have been identified in the general area although none in the close proximity of the trench at Woodside. Those sites are listed according to the catalogue numbers ascribed by the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) (eg NR93SW 178) or the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (eg WoSAS41653)

1 NR93SW 178 Lazy beds

Airborne Laser Scanning data has identified lazy beds at NR 92657 31402, 100m north-east of the cable trench.

2 NR93SW 177 Lazy beds

Airborne Laser Scanning data has identified lazy beds at NR 92776 31397, some 200m north-east of Woodside.

3 NR93SW 156 Hut circle

According to Airborne Laser Scanning data there is what may be a prehistoric hut circle at NR 92849 31408, some 250m north-east of the cable trench.

4 NR93SW 95/WoSAS41653 Township

On the first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6-inch map (Buteshire 1869, sheet 248) a township comprising four roofed and one unroofed buildings together with six enclosures is depicted at NR 9269 3120, 100m south of Woodside. The 1981 edition of the OS 1:10000 map shows one roofed and three unroofed buildings and five enclosures.

5 NR93SW 17/WoSAS4299 Cists and other possible prehistoric monuments

On a knoll at NR 9272 3119, some 120m south-east of Woodside, the remains of a cist were recorded in 1863. Other possible monuments were also recorded at this location although this awaits verification because the top of the knoll has been extensively damaged by quarrying.

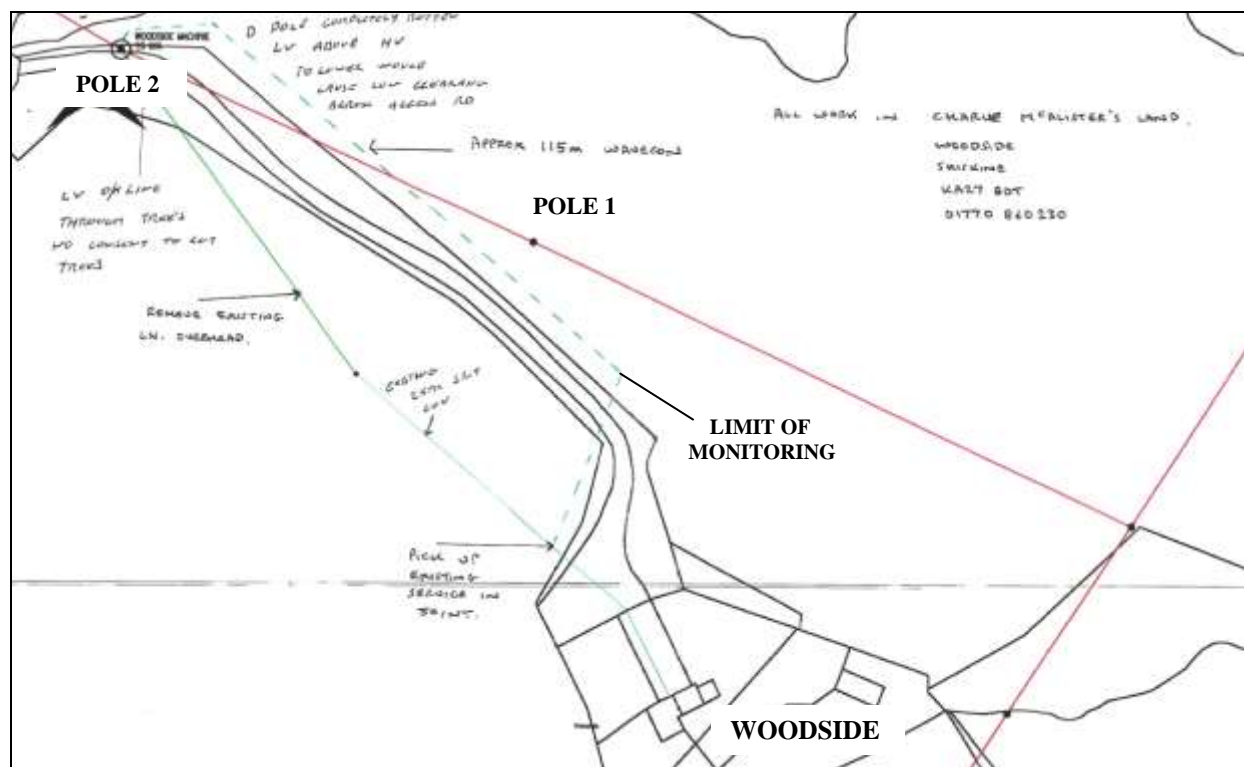
6 NR93SW 18/WoSAS4300 Standing stone

At NR 92620 31040, 250m south of Woodside, is a fallen standing stone measuring some 3m high by 0.8m broad.

THE WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief was undertaken by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology on 20 June 2019 when the weather was cloudy, damp and surprisingly cold. Trenching was carried out using a tracked mechanical excavator.

A large scale map of the site (supplied by SSEN), indicating the route of the trench is shown below.



Map, showing location of trench

On the above map red lines indicate existing high voltage (HV) overhead lines, the unbroken green line the existing low voltage (LV) line to Woodside and the broken green line the intended route of the replacement underground cable. However, the underground cable route has been changed somewhat from that shown on this map. Instead of cutting across the field to the west of the road it will cross Woodside's access road and car park, through ground already disturbed on a previous occasion. As a consequence, trenching was monitored only between Pole 2, the transformer pole for the LV line at NR 92588 31376, as far as the point where the trench returned southwards, at NR 92646 31322.

The monitored trench ran along the south-west edge of a pasture field which slopes down towards the access road to Woodside and which is bordered by young trees, mostly birch. It was some 80m long, 0.5m wide and 0.9m deep. The field also slopes down slightly towards Pole 2.

Topsoil of mid- to dark brown loam with lenses of boulders extended beyond the base of the trench, presumably because of hill-wash eroding down the slope. As the trench approached the transformer pole the ground became wetter and the topsoil darker and more peaty.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were uncovered in the cable trench and the only artefacts retrieved from it were a single sherd of 19th-century china and a fragment of a ceramic field drain. Neither was retained.



Cable trench from the north-west



Cable trench from the south-east

CONCLUSIONS

Although nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in this trench, the presence of several known archaeological sites of interest in the vicinity of Woodside together with the numerous important prehistoric sites and monuments located in the general area suggest that other such sites may well await discovery in this corner of Arran.