

Proposed exemption from Environmental Impact Assessment regulations: Mercury Substation expansion and upgrade: Comments on Heritage aspects

The comments below are based on a careful reading of the relevant sections of the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report (DEIR) and the Final Environmental Impact Assessment Report (FEIR), as well as an examination of the photographs accompanying the reports. The site of the proposed expansion has not been visited in person.

Observations of the area of the proposed expansion:

- The proposed expansion of the Mercury substation is 900m x 360m in size, and will extend the substation footprint towards the north (FEIR, & Background Information Document, technical details).
- The land immediately around the substation is currently agricultural land, primarily cropland (DEIR section 8.2.)
- The area displays no topographical features, and is in open, flat country (Photographs on pages 44 and 46, DEIR)
- A number of Transmission lines are linked to the substation (Photograph on page 46, DEIR)
- There are several access and other roads in the vicinity (Photograph on page 46, DEIR)

It is assumed that no major archaeological or palaeontological sites were located during the construction of the current substation.

No Iron Age sites or structures were identified during an examination of the aerial photographs of the current substation. The substation is also located away from streams or rivers where palaeontological material is likely to be preserved. Any scatters of Stone Age lithic material which might occur in the area are unlikely to be significant, and, due to ploughing activity, likely to be disturbed.

Conclusions:

- It would appear that there are no evident archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposed substation expansion.
- The area has been disturbed already to some degree during the construction of the current substation, existing transmission lines and roads.
- In my opinion it is unlikely that there would be any major archaeological sites in the proposed expansion area. However, if during construction, any subsurface material (such as stone tools or fossils) was uncovered, construction work would need to halt and an archaeologist notified immediately to assess the situation.

Statement of significance:

Probability of archaeological sites in the expansion area:	Low
Significance of archaeological sites if found subsurface:	Low

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