

CFA Archaeology Ltd

archaeological consultants

Advice on Archaeology & Planning

Environmental Impact Assessment

Field Evaluation & Excavation

Finds / Environmental Analysis

Geophysical Survey

Historic Building Recording

Site & Landscape Survey

Interpretation, Design & Display

**Middlewich Gas Main, King Street
Cheshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. Y085/13

 01274 864245

 01274 878494

 yorkshire@cfa-archaeology.co.uk

 www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

**Unit 22
Moorlands Business Centre
Balme Road
Cleckheaton
BD19 4EZ**

Tel: 01274 864 245

Fax 01274 878494

email: Yorkshire@cfa-archaeology.co.uk

web: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

Author	Mark Bell BA
Illustrator	Tamlin Barton BA
Editor	Martin Lightfoot BA MA MifA
Commissioned by	North West Gas Alliance
Date issued	June 2013
Version	1.0 DRAFT
OASIS Reference	cfaarcha1-147650
Grid Ref	SJ 70297 67203 - SJ 70675 66442

This document has been prepared in accordance with CFA Archaeology Ltd standard procedures.

**Middlewich Gas Main, King Street
Cheshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. Y085/13

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. WORKING METHODS.....	4
3. RESULTS.....	5
4. CONCLUSIONS	5
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	6

Appendices

Appendix 1: Context Register

Appendix 2: Photographic Register

Figures

Figure 1: Site Location and location of monitored areas

Plates

Plate 1: North-east facing section of trench on approach to Industrial estate

Plate 2: North-east facing section between King Street and Industrial estate

Plate 3: East facing section of utility trench at 45° turn towards Industrial Estate

Plate 4: North facing section of an access pit at King Street Industrial Estate

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the open-cut excavation of a pipe trench running along King Street in Middlewich along with several access pits. No archaeological features were identified during the groundworks and no finds were recovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) between 10 September 2012 and 12 January 2013 on the insertion of a gas main along King Street in Middlewich, Cheshire. The work was commissioned by Balfour Beatty Utility Services for the 'North West Gas Alliance'. The CFA code and number for the project is MIDL/2074.

All work was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) agreed with the Cheshire development control archaeologist. The work was intended to mitigate the destruction of buried archaeological remains should they be encountered, through 'preservation by record'.

1.1 Site Location and Description

The pipe trench ran roughly north to south along part of King Street (B5309), before entering an industrial estate to meet a previous pipeline adjacent to a railway embankment (Fig. 1). A number of access pits were excavated along the length of the former pipe trench to allow the insertion of the new pipeline. The open cut trench was c.0.3km in length, running from the bridge over the River Dane (SJ 70297 67203) to the railway line. The access pits were located on the current railway embankment, extending south towards a utility terminal on Holmes Chapel Road (A54) roughly 0.6km away (SJ 70675 66442).

The geology of the area is fairly complex with the superficial geology comprising 'Devensian - Diamicton Till' with bands of 'clay, silt, sand and gravel alluvium' over Triassic Sedimentary 'Halite Stone and Mudstone' (BGS 2013).

1.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

The area around between Middlewich town centre and King Street is well-known for Romano-British activity. The modern King Street follows part of the course of the 'King Street Roman Road'. The scheduled ancient monument of a Roman fort in Harbutt's Field (SAM 12615) lies less than 0.5km to the west of the pipe trench on the confluence of the Rivers Dane and Croco. The pipeline is within Zone 1 (Roman activity) of the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey Strategy.

Middlewich has been an area of industrial salt extraction as far back as the Iron Age. The Roman Fort along King Street is believed to have been constructed to control the exploitation of salt extraction. There is also evidence of extensive Roman settlement around King Street between the 1st Century AD and 400 AD (Shaw and Clark 2003).

A concise summary of archaeological investigations in the town is given in the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey of Middleswich (Shaw and Clark 2003).

A recent watching brief along King Street identified stratified Roman deposits, structural features and a section of a main Roman Road (Reid 2011), and significant Roman remain were being excavated during the course of the fieldwork on the adjacent Kings Street Industrial Estate, including the remains of salterns.

1.3 Objectives

In general the project objectives were to:

- determine the form and function of any archaeological features encountered;
- determine the spatial arrangement of any archaeological features encountered;
- as far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features, and;
- establish the sequence of any archaeological remains present on the site

2. WORKING METHODS

The development consisted of the excavation of a utility trench and a number of access pits to allow the insertion of a new gas main.

2.1 Watching Brief

The pipe trench was excavated by a mini-digger under close archaeological supervision along the length of the pipeline route. The trench was typically 0.5m wide and 1m deep. The excavations were recorded by means of standard forms, drawings and representative photographs in accordance with the WSI and CFA's standard procedures.

2.2 Standards and Guidance

CFA Archaeology is a registered organisation (RO) with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). All work was conducted in accordance with relevant IfA Standards and Guidance documents (IfA 1994), the WSI and CFA's standard methodology.

2.3 Monitoring

The Cheshire Development Control Archaeologist was informed in advance of the work commencing and updated during the course of excavation.

2.4 Archiving

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, plans and reports, will be ordered according to current guidelines and to nationally recognised standards (Brown 2011) in order to be deposited at the relevant museum within an agreed timescale. The Oasis reference for the project is cfaarcha1-147650.

3. RESULTS

The location of excavations are shown in Figure 1; Plates 1-4 show the open cut trench and access pits. The groundworks did not generally exceed a depth of one metre. The open cut pipe trench was generally 0.5m wide for a length of 200m. The access pits were generally 3m wide by 3m in length. No archaeological features or deposits were identified along the route of the new pipe trench or access pits and no finds were recovered.

The natural sand sub-strate, a mottled greyish-yellow silty-sand (000) was identified at a depth of 0.4m below the current ground surface (Plate 1).

A deposit of mid-brown sandy-silt (002) was identified on King Street on the approach to the industrial estate, underlying the modern road-surface at a depth of 0.4m. The deposit was archaeologically sterile and continued beyond the limit of excavation; this deposit may be the result of landscaping during the construction of the railway embankment (Plate 2-3). An access pit located in King Street Industrial Estate revealed a 0.5m deposit of dark plough soil (003) overlaying the natural yellowish grey sand (Plate 4).

The route of the open-cut trench impacted on areas that had been built upon or altered during previous groundworks, namely the construction of the railway and King St. Industrial Estate. The access pits were located on the cut of a former pipe trench severely limiting the likelihood of encountering undisturbed archaeological deposits.

4. CONCLUSION

Although the groundworks took place in 'Archaeological Character Zone 1: Roman Activity' no archaeological features were identified and no finds were retrieved. The likelihood of impacting undisturbed archaeological remains was very slight as much of the new pipe insertion was positioned over the cut of a previous pipe trench or in areas that have been significantly built upon.

The groundworks served to establish the absence of undisturbed archaeological remains in this area of archaeological potential.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, D. H., 2011, *Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*, Institute of Field Archaeologists

IfA, 1994, *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, Institute for Archaeologists, Revised October 2008

Reid, M. L., 2011, *An Archaeological Watching brief in Response to as Gas Main Replacement Programme, King Street and Kinderton Street, Middlewich, Cheshire*

Shaw, M. and Clark, J., 2003, *Cheshire Historic Towns Survey: Middlewich, Archaeological Assessment*. Cheshire County Council

Online Resources Consulted:

BGS, 2013, British Geological Survey, <http://www.bgs.ac.uk> (Accessed 13/03/13)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Number	Trench/Area	Type	Description
000	Site	Deposit	Natural sub-strate; mottled greyish-yellow sandy-silt
001	Site	Deposit	Modern road surface; bitumen, hardcore and compacted masonry rubble
002	Site	Deposit	Mid-brown, sandy-silt
003	Site	Deposit	Dark plough soil; friable sandy-silt

Appendix 2: Photographic Register

Number	Description	Facing	Conditions
1	East facing section of pipe trench at King Street/ Centurion Way Junction	North-west	Bright
2	West facing section of pipe trench on King Street	South-east	Bright
3	West facing section of pipe trench showing natural silty-sand	East	Bright
4	West facing section of pipe trench showing natural silty-sand	South-east	Bright
5	North-east facing section of pipe trench at 45° turn towards Industrial Estate	North-west	Bright
6	East facing section of pipe trench at 45° turn towards Industrial Estate	West	Bright
7	North-east facing section between King Street and Industrial Estate	South-west	Overcast
8	North-east facing section of pipe trench on approach to Industrial Estate	South-west	Overcast
9	West facing section of pipe trench in King Street Industrial Estate	North	Bright
10	East facing section of pipe trench in King Street Industrial Estate	North-east	Bright
11	North facing section of access pit in King Street Industrial Estate	South-west	Overcast
12	East facing section of pipe trench in King Street Industrial Estate	West	Bright

Plates 1-4



Plate 1: North-east facing section of trench on approach to Industrial estate



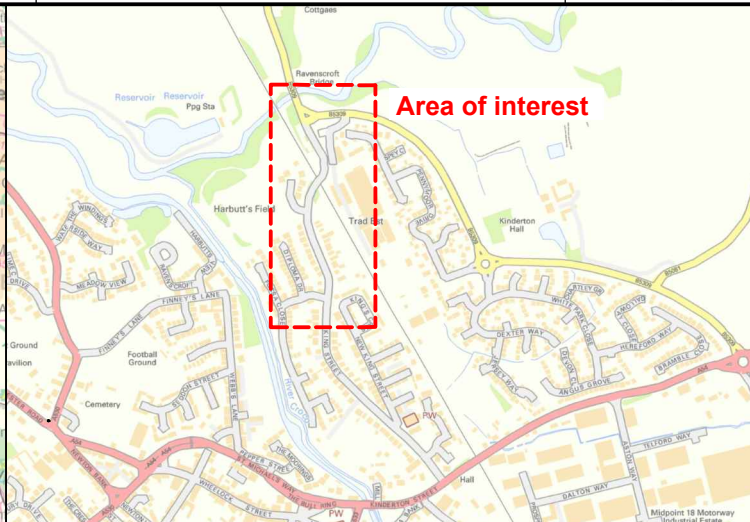
Plate 2: North-east facing section between King Street and Industrial estate



Plate 3: East facing section of Utility trench at 45° turn towards Industrial Estate



Plate 4: North facing section of an access pit at King Street Industrial Estate



CFA
ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD
Unit 22
Moorland's Business Centre
Balme Road, Cleckheaton
West Yorkshire, BD19 4EZ

T: 01274 864245
F: 01274 878494
yorkshire@cfa-archaeology.co.uk

Drawn by: TB	Checked: KH	Report No: Y0/8513
-----------------	----------------	-----------------------