Iron Age Remains on the Hanslope Pipeline Scheme, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire: Anglian Water WAT-07085 (Section B) Archaeological Monitoring Report

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Iron Age Remains on the Hanslope Pipeline Scheme, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire: Anglian Water WAT-07085 (Section B)

Archaeological Monitoring Report

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Summary

In response to a request by Nick Crank, the Senior Archaeological Officer for Milton Keynes Council, OA East carried out archaeological monitoring along a c.23m long section of Anglian Water pipeline scheme WAT-07085 (Section B), Hanslope, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. The monitoring was carried out for the laying of a new water pipeline through undeveloped agricultural land. Anglian Water had recovered a quantity of pottery from a location along the pipeline route and informed Nick Crank of their findings. Further investigation work was therefore deemed necessary to determine the possible presence of associated archaeological features at this location. A visit was carried out between 27th and 28th June 2019 which partly uncovered a pit feature whose fill produced Middle Iron Age pottery. This pit was cut by a partly revealed ring gully which yielded an assemblage of Late Iron Age pottery along with some reworked Middle Iron Age sherds. The gully also produced a piece of saddlequern, a quantity of burnt stone and fragments of animal bone. A further sterile pit was also uncovered to the southeast. These remains clearly suggest the presence of Middle and Late Iron Age settlement activity and complement the recently excavated evidence for Iron Age occupation in the north of Hanslope (Ingham 2019). No further archaeological remains were observed, or artefacts recovered from the remaining monitored area of the pipeline route.
Acknowledgements

OA East would like to thank Anglian Water for commissioning this project. OA East is grateful to Nick Crank of Milton Keynes Council (Conservation and Archaeology) for his advice and guidance. The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Nick Gilmour. The pipeline trenching work was monitored by Neal Mason and the illustrations were produced by Dave Brown. Thanks are extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Natasha Dodwell and prepared the archive under the supervision of Kat Hamilton.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology East (OA East) was commissioned by Anglian Water to monitor a c.23m long section of a new, c.1km long pipeline trench cut for scheme WAT-07085 – Section B (Fig. 1). The monitoring was undertaken where the pipeline route traversed undeveloped land to the east of the village of Hanslope, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. Anglian Water had recovered a quantity of pottery from a location along the pipeline route and informed Nick Crank, the Senior Archaeological Officer for Milton Keynes Council (MKC), of their findings. A monitoring visit was therefore requested by Nick Crank to determine the possible presence of associated archaeological features at this location. This document outlines how OA carried out the archaeological monitoring.

1.1.2 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum under the Site Code AYCBCM: 2019.135 in due course.

1.2 Topography and geology

1.2.1 The pipeline lies within the parish of Hanslope and to the east of the historic village (Fig. 1). The pipeline lay on open farmland extending between the village to the west and the M1 motorway to the east.

1.2.2 The underlying geology comprises Blisworth Clay Formation - Mudstone. This is overlain by Oadby Member - Diamicton (http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html, accessed 12th September 2019).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The pipeline scheme lies to the east of the historic village of Hanslope. The name is thought to derive from an Anglo-Saxon *Hammescole, Hanslepe, Anслеpe* – ‘muddy place or slop (sleaе) of a man called Hama’. As part of the Bunsty Hundred, the Lord of the manor was referred to in the Domesday book as held by Healfdene in 1066 and belonged to Winemar of Flanders (a tenant-in-chief) in 1086. The survey of 1086 lists 36 villagers, 11 smallholders and eight slaves. The 26 ploughlands consisted of two lord’s plough team (with four possible) and 18 men's plough team. Other resources listed include 11 ploughs of meadow, woodland for 1000 pigs and one mill (Domesday Book online).

1.3.2 Previous archaeological work in the village is confined to two recent excavations. An excavation on Long Street Road, on the northern edge of the village, was conducted by Albion Archaeology between 2018-19 (Fig. 2). This excavation uncovered evidence for Mid to Late Iron Age settlement in the form of roundhouses, four-post structures and rectilinear enclosures (Ingham 2019). Evidence for early medieval occupation to the southwest of the village along Castlethorpe Road was revealed by Cotswold Archaeology in 2018 dating from the Middle/Late Anglo-Saxon period until the 14th century (Brown 2018).
1.3.3 The Milton Keynes Council Monument Record for the immediate 0.5km vicinity of the monitored pipeline section only lists two findspots prior to the medieval period, consisting of two Roman coins (Fig. 2, MMK6759 and MMK6727). In the wider landscape, the Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Assessment Report for Hanslope (Green 2011, fig. 10) describes a group seven Iron Age and Roman findspots from the fields immediately west of the village and plots the conjectured route of a Roman Road to it’s east along with a possible roadside farmstead/settlement at Woad Farm (Fig. 2). The present church of St James dates from the 12th century, but presumably lies on the site of an older structure (Fig. 2, MMK3802). Metal detecting of Church End in the 1980s produced a wealth of medieval artefacts including: coins, jettons, seals, buckles, a pewter cup and a figurine (Fig. 2, MMK3883-9). It is possible the current Manor Farm with its 16th century origins may have been the location of the medieval manor house (Fig. 2, MMK69). A weekly market was granted to the village in 1293 which continued until the 18th century (Fig. 2, MMK3807).
2 EXCAVATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The objective of this monitoring visit was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the section of pipeline where the pottery recovered by Anglian Water was found.

2.2 Fieldwork Methodology

2.2.1 Monitoring was carried out on the pipeline trenching works through open farmland (Fig. 1).

2.2.2 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.

2.2.3 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's pro-forma sheets. Pipeline trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

2.2.4 The site conditions were good.
3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Descriptions of the ground conditions encountered, features identified, and artefacts recovered are given in this section. Artefact and environmental reports are included as Appendices A and B. Figure 3 provides a plan of the results of the monitoring work which incorporates a section of gully 6=10.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 A 7m wide topsoil strip (up to 0.25m thick) was carried out by Anglian Water along the pipeline route, the excavation of which produced the four sherds (177g) of Middle Iron Age (c.350-100BC) pottery that prompted the archaeological monitoring visit (Plate 1). The topsoil overlay a 0.1m deep subsoil. Seven sherds (32g) of Late Iron Age to Early Roman (c.100BC-AD50) pottery and a fragment of roofing slate (0.23kg) was also recovered from the subsoil during the monitoring. This subsoil was in turn underlain by natural deposits consistent with the Diamicton superficial geology indicated to underlie the site on the BGS website (Section 1.2.2). The archaeological features could be discerned cutting the natural deposits although the full extent of these features was masked by the subsoil. Ground conditions were good and remained dry throughout. Archaeological features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.

3.3 Results

3.3.1 Monitoring of the area of concern along the pipeline revealed a group of archaeological features laid out along a 23m stretch of its route (Fig. 3).

Pit 8

3.3.2 A shallow, sub-circular pit was uncovered that measured up to 1.2m in diameter and 0.18m deep with a flat-based U-shaped profile. Five sherds (17g) of Middle Iron Age pottery, 4.05kg of burnt stone and a large mammal bone fragment (20g) were recovered from its single backfill (9), which comprised light grey silty clay with rare flint gravel inclusions. Pit 8 was later truncated by gully cut 10.

Curvilinear ditch 6=10

3.3.3 The pipeline strip uncovered the northern extent of a curvilinear gully (6=10; Plate2), possibly representing a roundhouse gully, which formed a sub-circular shape in plan - 8m across - from northwest to southeast. The gully measured c.0.35m wide and c.0.3m deep with a V-shaped profile. Its fill (7=11) consisted of dark brownish grey silty clay with rare flint gravel inclusions. Evidence for the re-cutting/clearing out/maintaining of this gully was observed in one of the ditch sections (6 cutting 4; see Fig. 3 section). The fill (7) of cut 6 yielded 34 sherds (274g) of Late Iron Age to Early Roman pottery, two refitting burnt pieces of sandstone saddlequern and 4.75kg of burnt stone (Plate 3). Interestingly, the fill (11) of cut 10 also produced two sherds (21g) of Middle Iron Age pottery. The sherds of Middle Iron Age pottery recovered from this gully is probably due to the reworking of the fill (9) of pit 8 into the gully due to its truncation (Plate 4). The gully fills also contained a combined total of eight fragments (56g) of
animal bone, the identifiable fragments belonging to sheep/goat with one canine gnawed item.

Pit 12

3.3.4 Approximately 10m to the southeast of pit 8, lay a further sub-circular pit (12) that measured at least 2m in diameter and 0.21m deep (Plate 5). It contained a single fill (13), which consisted of dark greyish brown silty clay with rare chalk and charcoal inclusions. This fill produced six fragments (31g) of animal bone, the identifiable fragments belonging to sheep/goat.

3.4 Finds and environment summary

Stone (Appendix A.1)

3.4.1 Just 0.63kg (x3 pieces) of worked stone were examined from this site, consisting of two re-fitting pieces of saddlequern (c.0.41kg) and a fragment of stone roofing slate (0.23kg). Little can be said of such a small assemblage, except to confirm that the association of broken saddlequern with burnt stone (which has evidently been reused) is a very typical phenomenon of Early to Middle and sometimes Late Iron Age settlement sites, with much of this stone ending up in ditch fills and within abandoned pits used for domestic rubbish.

Pottery (Appendix A.2)

3.4.2 A small assemblage of 52 sherds of Iron Age pottery (521g) was recovered from the site. The assemblage is predominantly Late Iron Age to Early Roman (41 sherds, 306g), with a smaller Middle Iron Age component (11 sherds, 215g). The fabrics and forms represented in each assemblage are typical of the period and region.

Faunal remains (Appendix B.1)

3.4.3 Seventeen fragments of animal bone weighing 107g were recovered from the site. Only five fragments of bone are identifiable to taxon; all sheep/goat.
4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Mid-Late Iron Age remains

4.1.1 These remains clearly suggest the presence of Middle and Late Iron Age settlement activity. The artefacts recovered from the backfilled features are indicative of a domestic setting for these remains. The artefacts and ecofacts recovered from the gully and pits shed some light on the range of animal food consumed by the settlement’s inhabitants.

4.2 Significance

4.2.1 The monitoring of the pipeline trenching works for Anglian Water WAT-07085 at Hanslope has demonstrated the presence of archaeological deposits impacted by the scheme. Middle and Late Iron Age remains of local significance have been uncovered; there was previously a lack of any evidence for later prehistoric activity to the east of the village. These remains complement the evidence for Iron Age occupation recently brought to light to the north of the village (Ingham 2019) and the previously known findspots to the west (Green 2011, 20). These remains therefore form part of an emerging broader zone of Iron Age domestic settlement in the Hanslope environs.

4.3 Dissemination of the results of excavation

4.3.1 This document constitutes the final archive report for the project with no further work anticipated. The physical archive for the project along with a copy of this report will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum under the site code AYCBCM: 2019.135.
APPENDIX A  FINDS REPORTS

A.1 Stone

By Simon Timberlake

Introduction

A.1.1 Just 0.63kg (x3 pieces) of worked stone were examined from this site, consisting of two re-fitting pieces of saddlequern (c.0.41kg) and a fragment of stone roofing slate (0.23kg).

Methodology

A.1.2 The stone was identified visually using an illuminated x10 magnifying lens, and compared where necessary with an archaeological worked stone reference collection. A dropper bottle containing dilute hydrochloric acid was used to confirm the presence or absence of calcite in the rock.

Catalogue and description of worked stone

A.1.3 The top half of a small, thin stone roofing slate (100mm x 100mm x 15mm; weight 230g) made most probably of a ‘local’ (Buckinghamshire) Purbeck pendle or tilestone was recovered from the subsoil (2). The original size of this long-used and weathered (but more likely recently broken) narrow roof slate would probably have been around 100mm x150mm (long). The round (8-9mm diameter) nail or peg hole in the top of the slate remains intact, and the slate is not burnt. The stone is a sub-sparry shelly blue-grey limestone which weathers to a pale cream yellow on the exterior. Tiny fragments of echinoid spines alongside shell debris and possible plant and fish bone are recognisable within this suggesting that it may have come from one of the fissile limestones at the base of the Purbeck Formation. Today these rocks occur mostly as loose surface material rather than as outcrop, yet these limestones were once referred to as pendle and worked within stone pits to produce thin slabs of rough building stone and stone tiles; the limestones outcropping at localities such as Hartwell, Quainton, Bishopstone, Weedon and Whitchurch (Fitton 1835, 297-298). If not Purbeck, then the stone used may have been one of ‘pendle type’ limestone horizons of the Blisworth Limestone (Great Oolite). The slate is very unlikely to be prehistoric – but could be Roman, or later in date.

A.1.4 Two re-fitting fragments from the edge of a thin burnt flat-slab type saddlequern made from micaceous sandstone, almost certainly a glacial erratic, which were found together in the fill (7) of late Iron Age curvilinear ditch 6=10. Together these two fragments weigh 403g and re-fitted form a broken piece 85mm x 95mm x 33mm in size. This has been burnt (reddened) and is heavily sooted on one of the faces, the breakage probably being due to the burning. The quern itself has been used just upon the top surface which has been ground flat, suggesting a moderate level of use with
traces of ‘rounding over’ on the surviving rim edge. The stone had clearly been selected for use, given that this already fissile and split sandstone slab had both a flat base and top to it. The most likely date for this quern is Iron Age based upon its context as well as its mode of occurrence and use. We find a very large number of similar finds of small flat-slab glacial erratic-sourced saddlequerns re-used as domestic burnt stone following their wear and breakage at Early-Late Iron Age sites across East Anglia and Eastern England.

**Burnt stone**

A.1.5 Including the above two pieces of worked stone (saddlequern) a total of 9.23kg of burnt stone was recorded during monitoring. All of this burnt stone came from the same ditch fill (7) (=4.75 kg) and from the fill (9) of another pit (8) (=4.05 kg). All of the latter material was left on site, therefore this has not been examined. It is assumed however that this is all domestic in nature, and most probably associated with cooking practices.

**Conclusion**

A.1.6 Little can be said of such a small assemblage, except to confirm that the association of broken saddlequern with burnt stone (which has evidently been re-used) is a very typical phenomenon of Early to Middle and sometimes Late Iron Age settlement sites, with much of this stone ending up in ditch fills and within abandoned pits used for domestic rubbish (SEE Timberlake in Evans et al. 2018, 104 & 235). The stone roofing slate is interesting as it resembles some of the Roman Collyweston, Swithland and Purbeck slates (Dorset and Sussex), yet it seems possible (if not likely) that this has been produced locally, given the presence of Purbeck pendle type (tilestone) rocks which formerly outcropped between Aylesbury and Milton Keynes.

**Further work required**

A.1.7 No further work is required on this small assemblage of stone apart perhaps from some further confirmation of the geological origin of the stone slate fragment which may be Roman. It seems unlikely such work will be needed on this or any other of the stone found unless the site goes to full excavation.

**Disposal**

A.1.8 Given the small size of the assemblage there is no need to consider this at this stage.
A.2 Iron Age pottery

By Carlotta Marchetto

Introduction

A.2.1 A small assemblage of 52 sherds of Iron Age pottery (521g) was recovered from the site, with a mean sherd (MSW) weight of 10g (Table 3). The pottery was recovered from three contexts relating to one pit and two gullies; seven sherds were recovered from the subsoil with another four sherds from an un-stratified context (Table 1). The assemblage is predominantly Late Iron Age (41 sherds, 306g), with a smaller Middle Iron Age component (11 sherds, 215g).

A.2.2 The pottery is in a moderate/stable condition, typical of most prehistoric assemblages from the region.

A.2.3 This report provides a full quantification of the material by period.

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<td>Unstrat</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>521</td>
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Table 1: Quantification of Iron Age and Late Iron Age-Early Roman Pottery

Methodology

A.2.4 All the pottery has been fully recorded following the recommendations laid out by the Prehistoric Ceramic Research Group (2011). After a full inspection of the assemblage, fabric groups were devised on the basis of dominant inclusion types, their density and modal size. All sherds were counted, weighed (to the nearest whole gram) and assigned to a fabric group. Sherd type was recorded, along with evidence of surface treatment, decoration, and the presence of soot and/or residue. Rim and base forms were described using a codified system recorded in the catalogue, and were assigned vessel numbers.

A.2.5 Where possible, rim and base diameters were measured, and surviving percentages noted. In cases where a sherd or groups of refitting sherds retained portions of the rim and shoulder, the vessel was also categorised by form. The Middle Iron Age-type forms were codified using the series developed by JD Hill (Hill and Horne 2003, 174; Hill and Braddock 2006, 155-156).

A.2.6 All pottery has been subject to sherd size analysis. Sherds less than 4cm in diameter have been classified as ‘small’ (42 sherds; 81%); sherds measuring 4-8cm are classified as ‘medium’ (9 sherds; 17%), and sherds over 8cm in diameter ‘large’ (1 sherd; 2%). The quantified data is presented on an Excel data sheet held with the project archive.
**Fabric series**

Q1: Moderate to common sand. Sherds may contain rare linear voids from burnt out organic matter, mica and quartz. The clay matrix may also contain rare ferrous inclusions.

QG1: Medium moderate grog in a sandy matrix.

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*Table 2: Quantification of pottery by fabrics. MNV= minimum number of vessels calculated as the total number of different rims, rim/shoulder and bases identified (3 rims, 2 rim/shoulder, 2 bases)*

**The assemblage**

**Chronology and Character**

*Middle Iron Age (c.350-100/50 BC)*

A.2.7 A total of 11 handmade Middle Iron Age-type sherds (215g), with a MSW of 19.6g, was recovered from three contexts relating to one pit, one gully and one unstratified context. Pit 8 yielded five sherds (17g) with two sherds (21g) recovered from gully 10 and four sherds (177g) from the unstratified context. The Middle Iron Age assemblage consists of sherds in sandy fabric Q1 (Table 2). The assemblage yielded a series of rims, shoulders and base fragments, representing up to three different vessels. They include refitting fragments of a slack shouldered vessel with a slightly flared neck (Hill Form D).

*Late Iron Age-Early Roman (c.100/50 BC-AD 50)*

A.2.8 A total of 41 Late Iron Age/Early Roman sherds (306g), with a MSW of 7.5g, were recovered from gully 6 and from the subsoil. The assemblage consists of handmade sherds with smaller quantities of wheel-made pottery. Gully 6 yielded 34 sherds (274g) with seven sherds (32g) recovered from the subsoil. The assemblage is dominated by sherds in sandy fabric Q1, with smaller quantities of pottery in fabric QG1 (Table 2). The assemblage yielded a series of rims, shoulders and base fragments, representing up to four different vessels. They include refitting fragments of a slack shouldered vessel with distinct upright neck and rim (Hill Form A).

**Discussion**

A.2.9 The pottery from the investigations constitute a small assemblage and contains pottery dating from the Middle Iron Age (c.350-100/50 BC) and the Late Iron Age-Early Roman period (c.100/50 BC – AD 50). The Middle Iron Age pottery is concentrated in
pit 8 and gully 10. Late Iron Age-Early Roman pottery is concentrated in gully 6. The fabrics and forms represented in each assemblage are typical of the period and region.

### Catalogue

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**Table 3: Iron Age pottery catalogue**
APPENDIX B  ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

B.1  Faunal remains

By Zoë Uí Choileáin

Introduction and methodology

B.1.1 Seventeen fragments of animal bone weighing 107g were recovered during the site work (Table 5). The material was recovered from pits and gullies. All bone was identified using Schmid (1972). Surface preservation was evaluated using the 0-5 scale devised by Brickley and McKinley (2004, 14-15).

Results

B.1.2 The surface condition of the bone is variable; however, the main bulk represents a 2 on the McKinley scale (2004, 16, Fig. 6), meaning that there is a small amount of erosion. Two fragments of bone show signs of carnivore gnawing.

B.1.3 The surface condition of the bone on average represents a 2-3 on the scale devised by Brickley and McKinley (ibid). Most surfaces are masked by erosion; notably rooting.

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Taxon} & \text{NISP} \\
\hline
\text{Sheep/goat (Ovis/Capra)} & 5 \\
\text{Medium mammal} & 7 \\
\text{Large mammal} & 5 \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

Table 4: NISP (Number of identifiable species) summary

B.1.4 Only five fragments of bone are identifiable to taxon; all sheep/goat (Table 4). No repeated elements are present giving a minimum number of individuals of one. A single example of canine gnawing is present on a fragment of medium mammal long bone from pit 6. Nothing else of note is present.

Summary and recommendations

B.1.5 The assemblage is small, highly fragmentary and poorly preserved. There is little other information that can be gleaned from the material.
## Table 5: Total weight count taxon and elements present

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APPENDIX C  BIBLIOGRAPHY


Brickley, M. and McKinley, J. Brown, R. 2004 Guidelines to The Standard for Recording Human Remains. IFA Paper 7 (Reading: IFA/BABAO)


Evans, C., Lucy, S. & Patten, R. 2018 Riversides: Neolithic Barrows, a Beaker Grave, Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon Burials and Settlement at Trumpington, Cambridge, New Archaeologies of the Cambridge Region Volume 2, McDonald Institute Monograph, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, Oxbow


Hill, J.D. and Braddock, P. 2006 ‘Iron Age Remains on the Hanslope Pipeline Scheme, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire: Anglian Water WAT-07085 (Section B) Version 1


Electronic sources
https://opendomesday.org/place/TG1709/bowthorpe/
https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/BKM/Hanslope
**APPENDIX D**

**OASIS REPORT FORM**

**Project Details**

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**Prompt**

Water Act 1989 and subsequent code of practice

**Development Type**

Pipelines/Cables

**Techniques used (tick all that apply)**

- [ ] Aerial Photography – interpretation
- [ ] Open-area excavation
- [X] Salvage Record
- [ ] Aerial Photography - new
- [ ] Part Excavation
- [ ] Systematic Field Walking
- [ ] Field Observation
- [ ] Part Survey
- [ ] Systematic Metal Detector Survey
- [ ] Full Excavation
- [ ] Recorded Observation
- [ ] Test-pit Survey
- [ ] Full Survey
- [ ] Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
- [ ] Watching Brief
- [ ] Geophysical Survey
- [ ] Salvage Excavation

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| Address (including Postcode) | Land south of Newport Road, Hanslope, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK19 7ND |

**Project Originators**

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## Further Comments
Figure 1: Site location showing route of pipeline scheme WAT-07085 (red)
Figure 2: Site location showing route of pipeline scheme WAT-07085 (blue) along with known historical evidence in the vicinity (taken from MKC Monument Record and Green 2011)
Figure 3: Excavation plan with section
Plate 1: Pipeline scheme strip, looking north-west

Plate 2: Gully 6=10, looking north-west
Plate 3: Stone excavated from gully 6-10

Plate 4: Section of pit 8 and gully 10, looking north-west
Plate 5: Pit 12, looking north-west
Head Office/Registered Office/OA South

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