



Norfolk Street Area Conservation Area Character Statement



The town is above half a mile in breadth from the river to Littleport-street, where the East Gate was taken down in the year 1800. High-street extends in a direct line through the heart of the town and is lined with well stocked shops and houses of public entertainment, like the market places, into which it opens; and Norfolk-street, which branches from it to the site of the East gate, and is also of considerable length.

William White 1845

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Introduction

A Conservation Area - “An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

The conservation of the historic environment is part of our quality of life, helping to foster economic prosperity and providing an attractive environment in which to live or work. The Borough Council is committed to the protection and enhancement of West Norfolk's historic built environment and significant parts of it are designated as conservation areas.

Conservation areas were introduced by the 1967 Civic Amenities Act. Local Authorities were required to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest, whose character or appearance it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate them as conservation areas. This duty is now part of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act which also requires the review of existing conservation areas and, where appropriate, the designation of new ones. The quality and interest of a conservation area depends upon a combination of factors including the relationship and architectural quality of buildings, materials, spaces, trees and other landscape features, together with views into and out of the area.

The King's Lynn Conservation Area was first designated in 1969 and extended in 1979 and 1991.. This document highlights the special qualities which underpin the character of the conservation area, justifying its designation. It also seeks to increase awareness of those qualities so that where changes to the environment occur, they do so in a sympathetic way without

harm to the essential character of the area. This type of assessment has been encouraged by Government Advice (PPG15) and it has been adopted as supplementary planning guidance

This character statement does not address enhancement proposals. Community led enhancement schemes will be considered as part of a separate process.

Setting and Location

King's Lynn stands at the south-east corner of The Wash, but several kilometres from open water, at the outflow of the River Great Ouse, 170 kilometres (106 miles) from London, 69 kilometres (43 miles) west-north-west of Norwich, 74 kilometres (46 miles) north of Cambridge and 56 kilometres (35 miles) north-east of Peterborough.



Its location at the mouth of the Ouse, and the inland waterways that it serves, brought the port its early success. The basins of the

Gaywood River and the River Nar enter the town from the north-west and the south so the land is flat, and indeed much of it is reclaimed from the sea. But 11 kilometres (7 miles) to the east, the ridge of the western chalk escarpment rises to over 90 metres along the roughly north-south line of the Peddar's Way. King's Lynn is a low-lying conurbation, with salt marshes to the north and the dyke-lined Fens stretching away to south and west, often below sea-level. Huge skies dominate the nearly featureless, tree-swept landscape. Beyond Lynn to the north-west is the Wash. From King's Lynn itself views are limited, for nowhere in the conservation area does the land dip below three metres or rise to six metres above sea-level. There are good views within the town, but to architecture not landscape, with the exception of The Walks. One of the best views is from West Lynn over the River Great Ouse to the long and varied quays of the town.

The whole area is agricultural, with the soil of the Fens being among the most productive in Europe. Vegetables for freezing and processing are grown locally and this determines the nature of the bulk of Lynn's indigenous industry, with the product going by road and from the port of Lynn. The town is in the centre of a local agricultural catchment area, with small- or medium-sized market towns, and the nearest population centre which exceeds Lynn's 35,000 is the city of Peterborough.

King's Lynn - Origins and Historical Development

King's Lynn has its origins in the Saxon period, but the first settlement was small, based round a series of salt-water lagoons defined by the Millfleet to the north and the

River Nar to the south. On the west side were marshes and the open sea, but this has disappeared with the silting of The Wash and the deviation in the course of the River Ouse. The economy was based on fishing, some coastal trade and the production of salt, but it was not a major settlement until Bishop Herbert de Losinga founded the new town in 1100 and began construction of the priory church of St Margaret. Losinga's town was established to the north of the existing settlement, roughly between the Millfleet and the Purfleet with the market at Saturday Market Place.

Benefiting from the patronage of successive bishops of East Anglia, Losinga's new town became a significant regional trading centre and expanded so rapidly that by the middle of the twelfth Century the 'newe lande' to the north, between the Purfleet and the Fisherfleet, was developed by Bishop Turbe. A second market in Tuesday Market Place was established, and St Nicholas's chapel constructed as a chapel-of-ease to St Margaret. The number of religious houses built by the mendicant friars is, as always, a sign of the importance of a town, and in Lynn they arrived early and in numbers: the Greyfriars in about 1230, the Blackfriars in 1272, the Austin friars in 1293 and the Whitefriars in about 1260. To protect these and the expanding European trade the original defence earthworks were replaced to the north and north-east by flint and brick walls begun in the 1290s and running as far south as the Purfleet. South of that, as far as the South Gates, was a system of ditches and earthworks fed by the two rivers, the two fleets and by a canal dug to link the Nar and the southeast quadrant of the defences. Lynn

relied on water for landward defences as it relied on the River Great Ouse and The Wash for its prosperity.



Most trade went by sea and river, and there is evidence that ocean-going ships unloaded at quays into river craft for distribution inland. Merchants from the Low Countries had by the 12th Century established the Continental trade in wool: in the 1260s 1200 bales were exported, rising to 2000 by the early 14th Century. In the other direction came Gascon wine, coal, Baltic timber and luxury goods, especially after the Hanseatic League established a trading centre in Lynn. After that only London and Southampton (also with Hansa offices) beat Lynn in export volume and value. In less than 200 years Lynn grew from an obscure Saxon settlement crouching by a salt-water lagoon into the third greatest port of England.

From the 16th Century cereal export dominated, with coal, wine and timber constituting the principal return loads, and by the 18th Century Lynn and Yarmouth were the principal grain handling ports in England. In 1800 these two centres handled more grain traffic than all other ports in England put together. No wonder Defoe

attributed 'more gentry and gaiety' to Lynn than to Norwich: the merchants could afford it.



Trade declined in the 19th Century. First were the Napoleonic Wars, a disaster for a town which specialised in European trade, not with the expanding world empire. In 1844 came the railway, with more convenient and reliable access to the eastern counties, causing a slump in coastal trade. By the last quarter of the Century rail communications from Lynn were some of the best in England, including easy access to London and Hull, stifling the interests of owners of small ships. To compensate, the Alexandra Dock was opened in 1869. Located north of the Fisher Fleet it was capable of taking larger deep-draught vessels and eliminating the big problem in Lynn - the tidal nature of the River Great Ouse which meant that loading and unloading had to be done at the turn of each high tide. The Bentinck Dock followed in 1883, but the great trading days of the port were over.

There was always industry in Lynn: shipbuilding from medieval times, and heavy engineering following the construction of the docks and the arrival of the railway. Traction engines, farm machinery and fairground rides were made at the Savage works, and Dodman's Highgate Ironworks of 1875 made boilers, locomotives and ships. Cooper Roller

Bearings, founded in 1894, is the only surviving engineering works of the 19th Century period.



The period between the wars saw factories serving the new food processing industry, and in 1958 the most famous, Campbells, set up its factory in South Lynn. The post-war industrial boom experienced by King's Lynn prompted the London overspill scheme of 1962, which envisaged a population increase from 25,000 to 50,000 in twenty years. Encouraged by the local authority, fifty new companies came to the industrial estate at Hardwick, south-east of the town, requiring 5,000 extra employees. More houses were provided on the three existing satellite estates to accommodate the surge in population to 38,000 in 1975, and, infamously, the redevelopment of the town centre. Between 1962 and 1971 one fifth of historic King's Lynn disappeared in the area between London Road and the High Street in favour of new shopping malls and pedestrianised streets.

How is this history reflected in the built environment of the town? Power began to pass early from the bishops, but was encouraged by them. Bishop John Grey (1200-22) petitioned King John to grant Lynn a charter to be a free borough, but it was Henry VIII who granted the governing charter

setting up the municipal system of mayor, aldermen and councillors. Almost all of them were successful merchants who before the Reformation conducted town business in the Trinity Guildhall, Saturday Market Place.

Until the Reformation Lynn was concentrated in the strip of land near the river front, with large areas of open ground to the east stretching up to the town walls and ditches. Only the two main highways to the permanent gates of East Gate and South Gates were built up with houses and shops. East of a line roughly following the present Friars Street, All Saints Street, Tower Street and Chapel Street were the fields and the precincts of the friars. An exception was the Whitefriars, whose house to the west of Friars Street to the south-west of the centre survives only as a gatehouse. South-east of All Saints church were open fields and rope-walks.

This pattern of land use remained essentially the same until the first years of the 19th Century. John Wood's 1830 plan (Appendix 2 Map 4) indicates that the two central fleets were still open waterways, much reduced in width, and the southern spur of the Fisher fleet was still identifiable. The first systematic encroachments of the open lands were the development of the Valingers Road area in 1807, the new London Road of 1803-06 and the railway quarter built over the Blackfriars' land north of the Purfleet in the late 1840s and 1850s. These new streets were lined with terraces, and it is terraces that are the most important 19th Century contribution to the town's character.

The remainder of the open land was also being encroached. East of London Road came Windsor Place and Guanock Terrace, and the roads opening north of them, and in the same area south of the Millfleet was the

hospital. The most remarkable and important survivor of the old fields however is The Walks, one of the earliest municipal parks in the country intended for public recreation. The New Walk (the present Broad Walk) was well established by 1753, and planted with trees and hedges, with seats added, by 1762. The Town Wall Walk was laid out in 1800-27, covering an area from Guanock Terrace in the south to Kettle Mills in the north, but was bisected in 1844 by the railway, and the northern section closed in 1870. Further expansions in the 19th & 20th Centuries enlarged and consolidated The Walks (St James' Park 1903, St John's Walk 1906, the Recreation ground east of the walls on land bought between the Wars), so that today a realistic impression can be appreciated of the openness of the land in this part of Lynn through a millennium.

Domestic buildings and those with dual domestic and commercial function survive early in Lynn, the earliest being the stone-built Norman hall at 28-30 King Street, which, when new, looked straight out over the lagoon on the other (west) side of the street. Courtyard houses were confined to the first medieval town, on the west side of Nelson Street and Queen Street where the sea-bank allowed larger plots and where land was available up to the beginning of the 16th Century. Hampton Court and Clifton House were both begun in the 14th Century and Thoresby College in about 1500. More common are houses of an L-shaped plan, with a street front often used for shops, and a range running back at the rear, which contained the Hall. Nearly all the houses on the west sides of Queen and King Streets are of this type, the latter more altered than the former. This plan predominated from the 14th Century. Houses with shops began to disappear after 1560.

Almost every house in Queen Street and King Street has a Georgian front added to an earlier building, for example the early 19th Century front at No.14 King Street conceals a late 17th Century double-pile plan. None of the 18th Century houses had warehouses incorporated within them, and of grander 19th Century houses there is nothing remarkable in King's Lynn. The story is rather of terraced houses, all typical and beginning late, but of generally high quality, especially those in the developments round London Road. In the thirty years from 1821 1,384 houses were built in Lynn. King's Lynn also had its slums, situated in about 160 alleys or yards off the main thoroughfares, in which lived nearly a third of the town's population. Some of these survive and have been restored, but most succumbed to slum clearances in the 1920s and 30s. The gradual expansion of the town outside the walls continued throughout the 19th Century, but major planned developments came with the 20th Century, with council houses going up at Gaywood and North Lynn to the east and north, and at South Lynn.

Warehouses are more remarkable. The river front moved west releasing land and from the 13th Century it became possible to build on narrow plots along the west side of King Street. These plots were elongated in stages until river movement ceased in this area in the 17th Century. The movement of the river in the first town was rather slower, but began earlier when there was less pressure for land by the river. This resulted in more generous sized plots, reflected today in the surviving buildings dating from the 14th - 17th Century around open courtyards. Warehouse design changed from the later 15th Century from ranges parallel to the river, as at Hampton Court, to blocks set gable-end to the river, such as the Hanseatic Warehouse of about

1477 on St Margaret's Lane, the latter configuration capable of extension as necessary. St George's Guildhall on King Street of 1410-30 has behind it a whole series of added warehouses extending to the watergate at the river.

King's Lynn Conservation Area - 1969 to 2001

The original King's Lynn Conservation Area was designated in 1969, following the introduction of the concept of conservation areas in the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. At that time the conservation area was confined to the streets surrounding St Nicholas Chapel/Tuesday Market Place, and St Margaret's Church/Saturday Market Place, linked by King Street and Queen Street. (Appendix 1 Map 1).

In 1978 a re-appraisal of the historic character of King's Lynn within the old town walls was undertaken. The study area was divided into 18 zones with 10 of these zones forming the basis for a new, enlarged conservation area, adopted by the Borough Council in March 1979. (Appendix 1 Map 2).

In 1991 a minor extension to the conservation area was made in Stonegate Street to protect the remains of an historic house and shop contained within a printing works. Further minor adjustments were made in 1992 to accord with new base maps. There have been no additional changes since that time.

In the early 1980's the Borough Council became increasingly concerned about the alterations to the exterior of unlisted historic buildings which owners were making under normal 'permitted development' rights. The effect was to dilute the special character of

the conservation area by changes such as slate/clay roofs to concrete tiled roofs, and plastic windows replacing traditional timber frames. In 1983, at the Council's request, the Secretary of State for the Environment approved an 'Article 4 Direction' for King's Lynn Conservation Area under the Town and Country Planning General Development Orders 1977-81. The effect was to remove 'permitted development' rights for certain types of development, requiring formal planning permission to be sought.

Changes to the Designation of King's Lynn Conservation Area 2003

Through many centuries of development King's Lynn exhibits a complex traditional character. As a result of the review in 2003 it was felt that the existing single, large conservation area did not adequately reflect the clear pattern of growth which can be seen in the physical make-up of the town centre.

So the existing conservation area has been sub-divided into five new conservation areas with boundaries which define the main historic periods of development (Appendix 1 Map 3 shows the extent of these areas). Character Statements for each area have been written to highlight their special features and were approved by the Borough Council in 2003 and the text has been fully revised in November 2008.

Norfolk Street - Origins and Historical Development

In common with all of the land north of the Purfleet, there was nothing here but marshes, fields and tracks until Bishop Turbe

laid out his 'newe lande' in the middle of the 12th Century, effectively creating a new planned town with its own streets, market place, wharves and chapel. The new town was linked to the older settlement south of the Purfleet by two bridges, Stone Bridge (High Street) and Belvacos Bridge (Tower Street). But the road link out of town to the east and west had much earlier origins, for Norfolk Street (formerly called Damgate for most of its length) follows the line of an early medieval route running from Spalding in the east to the prehistoric Icknield Way in the west. This allowed movement of goods between the rich agricultural hinterlands of the northern Fens and West Norfolk along a strip of land between the southern edge of the Wash and the Fens themselves, with necessary ferry crossings at intervals.

The existence of an established route made the emergence of Damgate as a primary point of entry to the town virtually a matter of course. From the Survey of the Newland of c. 1250, it is clear that it was built up throughout its entire present-day length, with inns, warehouses, three canals or staithes at the east end, shops, houses and even an annual fair of its own. It was the longest built-up street in Lynn, running all the way to the River Ouse, and the survey identifies about 100 individual tenements between Broad Street and East Gate. In this section development was limited to a narrow band on either side of the street, though more densely built up west of Broad Street, and the pattern remained like this until the 19th Century. By the 14th Century the tenements lining the street had resolved themselves into long rectangular plots, with the short edge to the street, assisting in, even forcing, the development of the urban hall-house plan. In the 1570s the occupancy pattern east of Broad Street included tailors,

ropemakers, four public houses (the Greyhound and The George on the south, the Catherine Wheel and The Swan on the north), drapers, weavers, tanners, locksmiths, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, ironmongers, bakers, carpenters, one listed as a merchant and thirteen private residents. Some of the latter had multiple holdings and were presumably landlords to shopkeepers. In addition there were purely private houses. With the decline of corn and wool traffic from the west in the 16th Century and consequent loss of the annual fair, manufacturing and retail opportunities were developed to compensate.

Clearly Damgate was always one of the principal shopping streets of King's Lynn, as well as the home to diverse light industry and trading. At the east end was the bridge over the Gaywood River and the East Gate itself, one of the two principal points of entry to the town from the walls, built originally in the 1290s, where taxes could be levied or troublemakers repulsed as circumstances directed.



By the middle of the 13th Century Austin Street was also quite heavily developed west of its mooring fleet and bridge, with a corn mill on the north side of the cut south at the east end. Similarly, Paradise Lane had

tenements along the east side of the track, or road, but the area between Broad Street and the eastern defensive walls and ditch was mainly open land. Henry Bell's Plat of c.1670 (Appendix 2 Map 1) indicates much the same ribbon development along Norfolk Street and Austin Street, but virtually nothing on Paradise Lane, which had reverted to a winding lane across the fields towards Baxter's Plain. The Norfolk Street buildings have rear gardens, and on this map and on Rastrick's 1725 plan (Appendix 2 Map 2) the rectangular orientation of the plots is clear, very few if any amalgamated into larger plots.

The situation remained the same until the time of John Wood's 1830 plan of Lynn (Appendix 2 Map 4), and even then the differences are not marked. On the south side of Norfolk Street (now called that, not Damgate) are courtyard arrangements flanking Paradise Lane, which have since reverted to individual rectangular plots. Littleport Street at the east end is distinguished as such, Blackfriars Road is a lane called Back Lane with a terrace of houses, Union Place, at the north end, but otherwise with trees on the east side as part of the northern section of The Walks. There has been considerable building between Norfolk and Austin Streets, but still with large open spaces for allotments or orchards, and at the west end, where Albert Street and Albert Terrace now are, were the gardens of the former Austin Friars, dotted with trees.

In 1844 the railway arrived in Lynn, heralding great change to the fortunes of Lynn as a port, and more sudden and tangible change to the landscape of the immediate area. The station was



constructed right over one of the Walks, in open grassland, and a railway quarter grew up devoted to residential occupation, not commerce, at first in quality terraces. St John's church was built for the expanding population (in 1841 the population of Paradise Ward was 1,332, in 1861 2,276). By the mid nineteenth century, the western half of St John's Terrace was built, and New Street, now called Railway Road, was being developed south from Norfolk Street and north from Blackfriars Road. Both sides of the present Blackfriars Street were developed, including the Stepney Chapel of 1841 for non-conformists. Away from the railway sector, Albert Street had been built in the early 1840s, lined with houses on both sides, but the slightly reduced Austin gardens remained.

By 1857 the three 'railway streets', Waterloo, Portland and Wellesley, had been laid out and individual plots were being developed,

the earliest and one of the most superior being the terrace on the north side of Portland Street.



Blackfriars Road had been completed up to the Belgrave Hotel, and more encroachment was taking place from the Norfolk Street end, but another development was virtually finished - the triangle formed by Paxton Terrace, Coburg Street and Wyatt Street. Kirby Street, running south from Norfolk Street to Wellesley Street, had been commenced in the late 1830s, and was more than half developed from the north by the 1850s. Meanwhile, Railway Road had acquired that name and was lined with houses and certainly shops, and Marshall Street and Stanley Street were pushed out on the east side. Also taking shape were Old Market Street (linking the cattle market between Paradise Lane and Broad Street with Railway Road) and Albion Street, the former with the Union Chapel, the latter with the National School of 1853 to cater for education in a district of Lynn where it had not been required before. By 1855 it must have been difficult to appreciate that eleven years earlier this whole area was part of The Walks.

Up to the Second World War the situation changed only as far as density of infill was concerned, the only other new road laid out being Albert Terrace, from 1903. The cattle pens on the north side of Wellesley Street gave way to industrial units in the 1920s, and the Salvation Army barracks of 1880 at the east end of the south side was replaced with housing, but the pattern of development had been finally established. The next major change involved post-war development.

Norfolk Street, from Broad Street in the west to Littleport Bridge in the east, is one of a number of urban streets in England which is known to have been built up in a very similar manner as today from at least the 13th Century. The architecture of the shops which line it now is predominantly late 18th and 19th Century, with a number of post-war infill developments often amalgamating one or more of the original plots, but the pattern of plots is readily identifiable. Moreover, the nature of the buildings has remained consistent over the centuries, displaying only an expansion in the number of commercial properties over domestic ones, a development which accelerated after the mid 19th Century.

Several shops remain, some with flats on the upper floors, with direct evidence of earlier construction. The early 18th Century Nos. 117 & 118, on the north side west of Albert Street, is possibly one of the last timber-framed houses built in Lynn, disguised by a typical early 19th Century brown brick façade. Opposite is No. 26, and further out Nos. 37 & 38, all timber framed late 16th century buildings. Nos. 99 & 100 on the north side are identifiable as a late 15th Century range of shops on the ground floor with accommodation above, of brick and timber framing, and with an iron cullis surviving in the medieval passage to the

rear. Beyond Railway Road on the south side are Nos. 51-53: early 17th century and of the new ubiquitous material, brick, combining commercial and residential activity. Moving further east from the centre, No. 61 represents the late 17th century. At Nos. 74 & 75 one finds a five-bay mid 18th century composition with doorways right and left under acanthus hoods leading to the first-floor accommodation. In Littleport Street its early to mid Georgian period picks up the story, with Nos. 5 & 17, and then comes the



late Georgian at the Hob in the Well public house before going. Finally back with the 16th Century at the arches of Littleport Bridge.

These buildings are fairly evenly distributed along the street, and in their original state would have exhibited the plan forms and details of their respective periods. Many more will have survived into the early 19th Century, a period when building activity gripped King's Lynn, and Nos. 117-118 reveal the sequence of events which converted them into the series of properties of similar width. New tastes, especially in shop display windows, led to the street frontages being altered, perhaps by a new brick skin, perhaps by complete reconstruction. The increasing popularity of

Norfolk Street as a mainly shopping street from the middle of the 19th Century coincided with a new phase of building in the town, fed by the railway and the expanding population of the railway quarter. By the end of the century only a handful of timber-framed buildings remained obvious as such from the exterior, but within party walls there will remain copious amounts of medieval and 17th Century masonry and timber. Even in outwardly early 20th Century structures, there remains a great deal still to be discovered in the street.

The architecture of the other streets tells of a much more sudden and recent history. Railway Road is the other street with buildings put up from the beginning with a retail ground floor and residential upper floors. Uniform terraces were not really required, and there is an interesting dissimilarity of design and materials (apart from the use of brick) of the properties erected in the 1850s. The essentially residential streets west of the railway, Blackfriars Road, Waterloo Street, Portland Street and Wellesley Street favour brown brick terraces, of which the earliest, in Blackfriars Road and Portland Street are the grandest. From the late 1850s effort concentrated on smaller, two-storey terraces,

but usually with an effective design relying on symmetry, prominent doorcases and sash windows:- the infill in



the 'railway' streets, and those in Marshall Street and Stanley Street off Railway Road. Nos. 1-6 Marshall Street of c. 1850 are particularly fine examples of this modest but quality housing. Albert Street, built in the 1840s with terraces on both sides of the road (only those on the west side remain), is a similar but surprisingly early manifestation of the same thing. But by the opening years of the 20th Century the need to put up terraces to a specification and cost resulted in Albert Avenue. Leaving aside Norfolk Street, this area provides an instructive illustration of urban domestic and commercial design of the second half of the 19th Century.

Character Overview

Historically Norfolk Street was a busy commercial street bringing traffic and goods to Tuesday Market Place from the East Gate, in the same way as London Road does from the south, although its much greater antiquity is indicated by its narrowness and gently curving course. Pedestrianisation of the west end of the street, and the promotion of Austin

Street and John Kennedy Road into major circulation routes means that it is less dominated by vehicles than at any time before the 1970s, but confirms its traditional role as a shopping street. Only three houses remain as purely domestic buildings, though there are a limited number of first- and second-floor flats above the shops. This subtle change in emphasis was a deliberate policy in the post-war years with the extension of John Kennedy Road breaking through to link with Railway Road. This planning decision confines the bulk of through traffic to the south-north axis created by these two roads, which act as a continuation of the route from the South Gate via London Road - a logical and sensible conclusion to the schemes of the second decade of the 19th Century. Despite alterations of facades in the late Georgian and Victorian periods, the scale of the buildings and the size of the plots - with some obvious 20th Century exceptions - remain as they were in the 15th Century.

The alleys and yards opening off Norfolk Street are an attractive feature of great historical value, even if those, especially on the south side, have lost their purpose of

linking the street with the gardens and allotments which began to be systematically developed from the mid



19th Century. Particularly interesting is George Yard, for it retains two early 19th Century warehouse buildings (one now converted to housing) in what was the yard of a major inn. A suggestion of manufacturing or of coal and timber yards survives in the yard north of No. 96, and Paradise Lane, a very old thoroughfare, gives the impression and scale of a late medieval minor road.

There are no trees on Norfolk Street, but window boxes make a contribution, as does the lack of intrusive street lighting and signs, until the junction with Austin Street and Littleport Street is reached. Here the character changes. Littleport Street is much wider (it was originally narrower, but was widened as buildings were demolished on the south side), with Georgian houses on

the north side, clumps of trees and the remnants of the 13th Century town walls running



parallel to the Gaywood River. Small narrow parks open up to the north and south of the bridge, very quiet, contrasting markedly with the role of the street as one of the major points of entry to the town. The traffic diverts away from Norfolk Street north up Austin Street and south down Blackfriars Road, both of which have industrial sites redeveloped in loose, widely-spaced commercial units. Inevitably these principal traffic routes require prominent street signage and lamp standards.

Railway Road is another shopping street, but the development of the houses and shops along it was achieved in a matter of two decades from the 1840s, where there had been only green fields before. The street has undergone more rapid change than others in the area, with continuing alteration to facades and shopfronts, and a much higher rate of change of ownership of individual premises. The combination of traffic routes north up Railway Road into John Kennedy Road and east along Littleport Street to Austin Street allows the quieter,

more measured, development and conservation of all the other roads in this conservation area.

One of the more interesting groups of streets is the railway quarter, developed in a grid pattern following the opening of the railway station in 1844. Blackfriars Road (southern end), Waterloo Street, Portland Street, and Wellesley



Street are, all remorselessly urban in character, without trees, but lined with a good mixture of prestige and lesser, artisan, housing in unified terraces. Blackfriars Road, and its continuation west, Blackfriars Street, are busy traffic streets, but the others are in complete contrast, with no shops and no through routes. A similar sudden contrast is highlighted by Marshall Street and Stanley Street, opening off Railway Road, again quiet and characterised by polite, well-designed terraces of houses begun in the 1850s. The same may be said of Albert Street, off Norfolk Street, built up in the early 1840s, and Albert Avenue, an early 20th Century concept of cheaper housing with an atmosphere of a northern industrial town.

Spaces and Buildings

Blackfriars Road runs east from a busy four-way junction, with tall terraces on the north side overlooking St James' Park and the view east towards St John's church and the start of St John's Walk, with trees. It has an open aspect which is fully exploited by the grand mid 19th Century St John's Terrace with its area railings and



continuous wrought-iron first-floor balcony. The spear-head railings with cast-iron sleeper plates to Nos. 3 & 4 are particularly good examples. The road turns north after this, the corner neatly articulated by the Belgrave Hotel. A cycle track on the east side leading from the railway station is closed from the street by utilitarian galvanised steel railings in front of the late 19th Century iron railings to the vicarage garden. The dominating building is the gault-brick railway station of 1877 in Great Eastern style, with an impressive timber-fronted buffet in the interior hall, and cast-iron canopy supports to the platforms. Beyond the station is a red brick single-storey service building. The Conservation Area boundary has been extended here to the north, east and south of the station and a small area to the

north-east has been removed to ensure the boundary fits more accurately with the station car park area

The east side of Blackfriars Road north of this point is outside the conservation area, and the west side continues with a three-storey late 19th Century block at the corner with Portland Street, giving way to an early 20th Century two-storey terrace (Nos. 12-15). The conservation area boundary turns west at Wellesley Street, but further north on Blackfriars Road the Conservation Area boundary has been extended to include the terrace of 19th century houses at the north-west end of the street, many of which still have good doorcases. Wellesley Street together with Portland Street and Waterloo Street constitute the earliest of the 'railway' developments of King's Lynn after 1844, when the first station was opened. They are planned streets, and together form a grid of three rectangular blocks between Railway Road and Blackfriars Road, the first to be laid out being Waterloo Street in the late 1840s. **Waterloo Street** is the narrowest, with only one tree, and the relics of a 20th Century light industrial past on the south side. These industrial buildings are low key and do not overwhelm the terrace of small single-bay houses opposite, each one fitted with a more elaborate doorcase than would be typical. **Portland Street** in contrast is an unusually wide street, wider than Railway Road, completely urban in character, without vegetation. The scale of the main terrace on the north side, Nos. 3-15, gives a solid

prosperous air to the street, of three storeys-a fitting entrance to the town from the original railway station.



plus basements. Most have, excellent doorcases, and original doors, and spear-headed or acanthus-headed railings on cast-iron sleeper plates. The remainder of the north side continues the theme with a lower three-storey terrace, Nos. 17-23, making up for lack of doorcases with a rusticated ground floor and window hoods which, on nos 21-23 are on consoles. Facing Nos. 17-23 are Nos. 16-24 on the south side, with the same detailing, but with the variation of a stuccoed cornice below the attic storey.

Wellesley Street has suffered mixed fortunes in the 20th Century, but in the 19th Century had only a terrace of four houses

on the south side, plus the Salvation Army Barracks, now rebuilt. It stands outside the conservation area boundary.

From the junction of Blackfriars Road with Railway Road, **Blackfriars Street** continues west. Here the Conservation Area has been adjusted to realign the boundary with the kerb line. With the exception of the Stepney Chapel and the former red brick gabled school of 1843 the view west is of the late 20th Century. The chapel of 1840-1 by J. Fenton presents a gault brick pedimented front turning from Classical on



the ground floor to Italianate on the upper floor and has very fine contemporary railings and gates. The Conservation Area has been extended at this point to include the former school building immediately to the west of the Chapel. This building relates well to the Stepney Chapel and marks the end of the historic part of Blackfriars Street.

Railway Road is an entirely new development of the 1840s and 50s, and runs due north, with only a slight deviation to the west just south of Stanley Street, so one end cannot quite be seen from the other. It dips marginally in the centre, dropping to 4.0 metres (4.3 yards) from 5.2 metres (5.6 yards) at each end, so is effectively flat.

There are no trees and no greenery, not even a window box; it is a street dedicated to commerce and traffic with only a handful of domestic houses. The houses and shops are varied, within an overall pattern: rectangular plots with the short edge to the street and buildings of 2-3 storeys in height, but not a single one is a listed building. This pattern, typically for commercial streets, has altered, with amalgamation of plots for larger new premises of trading concerns, and different treatment of frontages, some stuccoed, some rendered and others left as plain brick. This is immediately illustrated on the east side, with the three-storey brown brick of No. 33, followed by the rendered Footlights Dance Centre replacing three former buildings. Between Waterloo and Portland Streets are a group stepping up from two to three storeys, with mixed finishes to the facades, and more unity at the north end. Unity is the key to Nos. 41-48, north of Portland Street, a terrace built in one season, some of which has a superior rusticated ground floor, but with only two original doors, and sashes to only a few properties.

The west side of Railway Road begins with a former public hall of 1884 by E.J. Colman, with finer detailing to the windows and doorcases, then two purely residential brown and red brick houses (Nos. 32 & 32A). The widened entrance to Old Market Street opens on the west, marked by the splay-sided modern commercial property on the north corner. Next comes the contrasting former Tabernacle Chapel of 1852-3 (No. 26A) built to seat 620 people, and with its internal cast-iron gallery columns intact, and an external shaped gable high and visible from a distance. Then follows a unified commercial and residential terrace of two storeys, made less unified by later alterations, and finished by Nos. 18-20,

formed from five original properties and given a 20th Century façade out of keeping with the remainder.



Albion Street has a wide entrance, the product of clearances in the 1970s, with a view west to the car parks of post-war King's Lynn. Continuing with Railway Road on the west side is a series of five mid 19th Century two-storey buildings presenting a wide-narrow-wide-narrow-narrow rhythm beginning with a former pub. This has its exposed brown brick, but the remainder have been treated to a variety of pastel washes over render. A pair of large, three-storey residential houses take over, followed by a lower two-storey property, originally another pub. The entirely modern Oldsunway yawns open at this point, its initial width beginning the break-down in the unity of this side of the street. The block running up to Norfolk Street is mixed, with more of the 20th than the 19th Century evident, and with a big gable of the terminal building on Norfolk Street providing an accent. Until the 1960s shake-up of central Lynn this is where Railway Road ended, at a T-junction with Norfolk Street. **John Kennedy Road** was introduced as no more than a traffic artery.

The east side of Railway Road north of Wellesley Street has a good run of terraced houses, No. 53 is still residential. The first unit (Nos. 49-51) was originally four houses, of which the first two provided the accent by being three storeys high. They have been amalgamated into a restaurant (the former Glendeven Hotel). The remainder benefit from the slight deviation in the street line and again have mixed treatment to the facades. Between Stanley Street and Marshall Street are the best houses in the street; two brown-brick pairs (Nos. 57-58 and 59-60) with doorcases and, for Nos. 60 and 58, their sashes surviving to illustrate the way a number of properties in the street must have looked when new. Between them is the yard of A.F. Holman & Son marked by the good 1895 façade of No. 58A itself, dressed in neo-Jacobean guise. Then, to finish the street, another mixed group stepping up and down between two and three storeys and the usual varying surface treatment of the facades. North of this is John Kennedy Road and a view of the modern commercial and utility quarter of King's Lynn, outside the conservation area.

Of the streets running off Railway Road to the east, those of the railway quarter have already been considered. The other two, **Stanley Street** and **Marshall Street**, are among the oldest and represent the remains of a small good-quality residential development of the early 1850s, together with a lost street, Bedford Street, linking

them at the east end. No. 1 Stanley Street presents a big flat brick façade, and the south side continues with a workshop unit



gable-end to the street. The north side now has a post-war single-storey unit, and the view to the east is of 1980s housing developments outside the conservation area. The south side of Marshall Street is all good. First is the return façade of No. 60 Railway Road with its doorcase intact, then a remarkable two-storied workshop unit gable-end to the street with a clerestory of small-paned windows along the west side. The Conservation Area has been extended to include the rest of Marshall Street, which consists of an almost complete terrace of artisans' houses of c. 1852, Nos. 1-6. They have paired doorcases with console brackets and although only Nos. 4 & 5 have their genuine doors and sashes, the terrace is complete and capable of being returned to its original condition.

Three streets run off Railway Road to the west, two of which owe their character almost entirely to the 1960s. **Old Market Street** is the southerly one, like Railway Road a new development of the early 1850s, built up on the south side by the late 1870s. The view west gains from the visual termination of the museum but suffers from

the cluster of signage and traffic lights at the Railway Road junction. There is a valuable clump of shrubbery on the north side by the former school. The Lord Kelvin pub on the south is painted in a red ochre, which makes it a minor landmark and No. 10 beyond it retains its late 19th Century shop and accommodation character. Set back to the south is the unprepossessing rear of the Christian Fellowship centre. The conservation area ceases west of No. 10 and diverts north along **Albion Street**. This has the same history as Old Market Street, and the same dates, but is much more intact. First on the west is St John's public elementary school of 1853 (now Pedlar's Hall cafe) in the Tudor style with mullioned windows, little



gables and white painted brick trim. It is also an integral part of the street scene on Albion Street, facing a late 1850s terrace of eight, partly rendered and partly of plain brick, like the terrace in Marshall Street capable of having sashes, doors and slates replaced. The last three are set back slightly. Then follows a short group of light industrial buildings, 20th Century at the north end, before the road swings east to join Railway Road, with the return of Nos. 14 & 15 Railway Road to the north and car parking

to the south. The school and its immediately surrounding have been included in the Conservation Area.

To the north is **Oldsunway**, a new road of the 1960s where no road had been before, taking traffic to the car parks of the new commercial centre. The south side is mainly car parking and is outside the conservation area, but on the north are the backs of older properties on Norfolk Street. There is little foliage apart from the occasional clump in a northern yard. The northern yards are either car parks for Norfolk Street premises, storage areas or derelict yards of light industry, although one or two businesses still trade. Fronting King's Lynn Glass about half way along is a stretch of partly rebuilt brick wall of the late 17th



Century, with a later, almost illegible date stone of 1865. Nos. 4 & 5 are a pair of early 19th Century mansard-roofed houses, then another yard and then two hipped warehouse buildings. One of these early 19th Century buildings, which once served George Yard, off Norfolk Street, and are built over another old brick wall, here of c. 1600, has been converted into two houses. The road continues towards Vancouver Court, outside the conservation area.

To the north-east of this area at the east entry to the town is **Littleport Street**, the medieval and present extension of Norfolk Street. Of the East Gate there is nothing to see, and the view west from Gaywood Road gives no indication of the 16th Century bridge under the 20th Century structure, necessary to strengthen it. There are welcome groups of trees, quite dense on the north side opposite the Hob in the Well public house (listed, early 19th Century), especially in front of the early 18th Century listed No. 17. From the bridge is a limited but satisfying vista north and south along the Gaywood River, better to the north. **Kettlewell Lane** to the north and



Littleport Terrace to the south track the course of the river, and more significantly the medieval walls, which here survive in their most complete form. Circular-section iron railings mark the boundary of the tree-studded little park off Kettlewell Lane. Littleport Terrace and then Wyatt Street have the walls on their east, behind which is another small elongated park rich with trees. The Conservation Area has been extended to the west and the south to include the listed bridge over the Gaywood River, and to include the entry to the Highgate area.

Littleport Street continues west, with a row of houses and shops on the north side and an empty space for proposed housing where a petrol station has been demolished on the south. The north range begins with an 18th Century pair, Nos. 13-15, then 20th Century infill, and, rather grand, the stucco-fronted No. 5. Two storeys and attic and seven bays wide, this is a late 18th Century merchant's house. The west end of the street has more trees on the south side, but there is a disappointing junction with Austin Street, marked by a forest of traffic lights and a camera pylon in the triangular central island, ringed with galvanised steel railings. The three-storey return of No. 71 Norfolk Street is however a good punctuation mark at a visually important junction. **Austin Street** cuts north but the four-bay brick façade of Nos. 114-118 on the west is the last 19th Century structure on this side of the street. On the east the houses are outside the conservation area, and ahead are late 20th Century housing developments, quite nicely angled to the street and each other. The street swings west, with commercial activity on the north behind a chain-link fence and on the south **Anglia Yard** and car parking. At the west end of the street there are scattered trees on the north and south, but the view in three directions is of car parks. From here John Kennedy Road cuts south to Railway Road, where Norfolk Street crosses.

The section of **Norfolk Street** within this part of the conservation area runs from Broad Street to Littleport Street, the history and development of which has been noted. It is a long, not wide, street gently curving in its western half, much straighter in the eastern, but its course is set west-east, out of the town. There is only the most marginal elevational change in its course, from 5.2

metres to 5.9 metres (17 - 19 feet), so again it is flat. In the 19th Century numerous small yards and alleys opened off it to the north and south, and some, such as Paradise Lane and Kirby Street were important thoroughfares, but most have been obliterated, principally in the post-railway era. Those that remain are adjuncts to Norfolk Street, not comparable to the actual roads diverging from Railway Road, so will be taken into account here. The first part of the street, from Chapel Street to Albert Street is a pedestrianised area, laid with stone setts, and the character of the whole is of an intimate, narrow street continuously lined with two- and three-storey shops. There are few unified groups of more than two shops, so the impression is of constant variety. Today there are no wholly domestic buildings at all. Its commitment to urbanity is emphasised once again by the complete lack of trees or foliage other than in window boxes.

The south side begins with a studious classical block of the 1920s (the former Catleugh department store) wrapping round the corner with Broad Street, and thereafter is a sequence of three shops with three-storey frontages, their cornices all at the same height, but their architectural styles differing. The upper floor of Nos. 15-16 have classical pediments to the windows, but Nos. 17-18 has timbering applied to the façade in imitation of Elizabethan architecture, then No. 18A in the manner of mid 19th Century townhouses, with exposed brown brick and sashes. The scale then drops to two storeys with No. 19, then a 1980s infill of the same size and another, taller, late 20th Century building. Up to No. 28 is a series broadly of uniform two-storey height, most of which are 19th Century rebuilds of older buildings apart

from the listed 16th -Century No. 26. Between Nos. 23 and 24 is the entry to **George Yard** which takes its name



from the pub which occupied No. 23, and whose sign has been transferred to the side of the premises within the yard, on the west. The yard passage has rebuilt walls on both sides, and there has been reconstruction of 19th Century workshop units within the irregular open space beyond, but two important early 19th Century warehouses remain, side by side, and noted from Oldsunway. One has now been converted to housing.

The north side of the street has buildings of differing height organised more regularly, in places almost alternating. A disappointing 1960s building faces Holland & Barrett at the junction with Chapel Street, but No.s 125-127 are reasonably good mid 19th Century two-storey properties, No. 125 being mimicked in the 20th Century No. 124. The next pair regain three-storey status, although No. 123 is a rebuild (the previous building having been bombed) with exposed brick cavity walling, and No. 122 has uPVC windows. A sudden lower variation follows, and then a pink-painted three-storey, three-bay shop with mid 19th Century sashes. Next the listed Nos. 117-118 and

finally a tall late 19th Century brown brick edifice turning the corner into Albert Street, with sashes.



Resuming the south side is first No. 28, a curiously tall, narrow mid 20th Century rebuild, the next small-scale building (No. 29) has uPVC detailing, and then one of the largest, a three-storey, four bay pair of shops and flats of c. 1879, of gault brick with red brick interlaced detailing. Between this and Paradise Lane is another rebuild matching height if not width. **Paradise Lane** in medieval days wandered into allotments and open areas and by the later 19th Century gave access to the cattlemarket, still by a twisting route. Today it is a short straight alley framing the view of Oldsunway and the car park beyond, under a pair of modern

cast-iron overthrows. No. 32 is again small-scale, with an early 20th Century front but 18th Century brickwork in



the west wall. Three 19th Century shops continue east to Nos. 37-38 (listed, late 16th Century) which is sandwiched between them and the large and conspicuous 1970s No. 39 with unfortunate projecting windows and exposed concrete floor beams. No. 40, of c. 1860 competes with it by being raised in height in c. 1880, and carries one of the discreet wall-mounted street lights which benefits this street. Between these two is an alley, **Ostler's Yard**, so called because No. 39 stands on the site of an inn, the inn yard built over by sheer walls of brick. The yard pavement has some remains of its once-cobbled surface. Running up to Railway Road is a good group of two-storey 19th Century painted brick facades with sashes and varied display windows.

The north side leaves Albert Street by way of a group of three mid 20th Century ranges, breaking up the rhythm of the street by being partly set back and, at Nos. 100-114, having wider frontages than their neighbours. Nos. 105-108 resume the street line and present first two three-storey buildings and then two lower ones, all from the second half of the 19th Century. Of a similar date to the three

storey Nos. 103-104, but located immediately west of No. 104, is a passageway through to the rear containing 16th Century timbers in addition to two RSJs. No. 104A facing the yard has remains of a jettied north front, but it looks across not a yard but unexpectedly a spur of the Austin Street car park: from a narrow street of medieval origins, through the narrowest of passages into a wide expanse of tarmac, with trees. To the east are derelict remains of a building in the next yard. Behind this section of Norfolk Street two small areas have been removed from the Conservation Area so as to align the boundary with the rear boundaries of the Norfolk Street properties.

Back into Norfolk Street and another pair of two-storey shops squashed between larger ones, the larger one, No. 100 with a 19th Century front but evidence of a 15th Century interior. It is listed along with No. 99, back to two storeys, and also 15th Century. Between them is a private passageway. Next a group of three, the first two of mid 19th Century brown brick (rendered and painted white to No. 98), and No. 96 with a slightly later brick skin but an older interior. Between Nos. 96 and 95 is a carriageway with timber doors leading to another irregular yard with trees overlooking it at the north end and various lock-ups backing onto it. To the west is the broken-down walling of a building already noticed. At the end of the passageway stands a curious small single-storied building with a canted entrance corner and carstone and brick construction. Of about 1905, it is probably the office of a tradesman's yard. Norfolk Street meets Railway Road with a very tall bald painted building of the late 19th Century.

Poplar Garage and Bennett's Yard have been replaced by Lidl superstore and delivery bays. Next is the most townish of all

19th Century brown brick blocks, Nos. 78: three storeys and six bays wide, fitted with original sashes. It encompasses the entry to Anglia Yard and the 1990s housing developments within it. Nos. 77-76 is a competent mid 20th Century rebuild, but Nos. 74-75 are the best of the mid 18th Century shop and flat developments with the original frontage above the display windows. Of about the same height is No. 73, and then the almost inevitable taller bulk of the corner building at Austin Street.

The south side moves east from Railway Road with an attractive group of two-storied buildings, mostly early 19th Century but including the listed Nos. 51-53, of the early 17th Century. No. 61, painted cream, is also listed, late 17th Century, and Nos. 62-64 were in c. 1860 a three-shop group, now somewhat knocked about. The truncated stump of **Kirby Street** goes off to the south and leads to the modern development at Emmerich Court. Nos. 65-70A take us to Austin Street, a very good and simple mid 19th Century row of varied heights and dispositions, and including three domestic properties, Nos. 65-68A.



Albert Street links Norfolk Street with Austin Street and was built up on a new site in the early 1840s. Only the houses on the west

side survive; the rest were demolished as part of the 1970s reorganisation and are now part of the large Austin Street car park. The nine houses are surprisingly varied, built in groups of one, two or three as if by different speculative developers. The rise and fall of the skyline is an engaging feature, as is the survival of such a large proportion of original fittings. Of them all however only Nos. 7 & 10 retain all of their sashes, doors, doorcases and slate roof cladding. **Albert Avenue**, which is an extension to the Conservation Area, cuts off to the west and then sharply south, laid out from 1903 with conventional terraces of the time. The unusual northern town appearance of the southern section derives from the flatness of the facades, here all of uniform height, and the width of the road, and the lack of trees, apart from the coincidental existence of a tree at the far end, over the boundary wall. Its style and unity of scale gives it a particular character. At the northern end is part of the wall of the Austin Friars dating from the 16th Century, with the bulk of King's Court looming over it.

The east side of **Chapel Street** falls within this part of the conservation area, south of No. 42. From Norfolk Street on this side is the looming mass of QD's store, with similar-sized modern walling opposite. But the prospect opens, and on the east is Chapel Court, a 1980s development in vernacular style and materials, giving way to Nos. 30-40 (also 1980s) then the listed early 18th Century No. 42, an asset to any street. Running back from this is more of the 16th Century brick wall of the Austin Friars, and in the service yard behind Nos. 30-40, a very fine section of walling, of the same date and style.

Listed Buildings

There are 40 listed buildings in this section of the conservation area. The Statutory List was revised in 1989-90 and issued on 26 July 1993. In August 2001 the King's Lynn Railway Station was listed, grade II. There are no buildings listed Grade 1, 2 listed Grade II* and 38 listed Grade II.

Listed Grade II*

- **Town Wall, Kettlewell Lane.** One of the few surviving lengths of the 13th Century defences, with a series of stilted brick arches on the west side opening into small chambers and further four-centred arches behind. These supported the wall walk on which defenders positioned themselves. Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 174A.
- **Town Wall, Littleport Terrace and Wyatt Street.** A similar length of limestone, brick and carstone wall, probably rebuilt in the 1290s, with less pronounced niches and chambers on the west side. Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 237.

Listed Grade II

- **King's Lynn Railway Station.** 1871-2, built for the Great Eastern Railway, the builder was Robert Skipper of Dereham, additions and alterations in 1910.
- **Nos. 3-13 (consecutive) Blackfriars Road.** A very handsome brown brick terrace of the 1840s, and one of the first developments in the railway quarter. A unified composition in the manner of London 'palace fronted' terraces, with a fine continuous wrought-iron balcony at the first floor, and good railings to the street.

- **No. 14 Blackfriars Road.** The Belgrave Hotel completed the terrace and occupies an important visual corner facing The Walks to the south and the railway station to the east. Of c. 1850, brown brick and another excellent iron balcony.
- **Stepney Chapel, Blackfriars Street.** A Baptist Church of 1841, of gault brick, with a three-bay façade under a pediment and good railings to the street.
- **No. 42 Chapel Street.** The early 19th Century brown-brick façade conceals an early 18th Century interior: pedimented Tuscan doorcase, modillion eaves cornice and sashes.



- **Littleport Bridge, Gaywood Road.** The present reinforced concrete structure conceals but protects the two 16th Century stone arches on brick revetments. Under the arches are chamfered and stilted ribs. Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 303.
- **No. 5 Littleport Street.** Large seven-bay late 18th Century house with the centre three bays projecting slightly, and linked by a timber modillion eaves cornice.
- **No. 17 Littleport Street.** The early 18th Century five-bay façade was reduced

to four in the following Century, disturbing the symmetry. Fine Ionic doorcases with a seven-paned fanlight, and, inside, the former saloon with apsed ends.

- **Hob in the Well, Littleport Street.** Prominently positioned early 19th Century pub with later outbuildings incorporating part of the town wall.
- **Lynn Museum (formerly the Union Baptist Chapel), Market Street.** Union Baptist Chapel of 1859 by Robert Moffat Smith. Converted to a museum in 1904 and extended in 1973, with more recent alterations. Gault brick banded with red brick and some stone dressings. Slate roofs. 3 stage north-west tower of square section.



- **No. 26 Norfolk Street.** Evidence remains of the formerly jettied late 16th

Century timber-framed house and shop of a wealthy trader.

- **Nos. 37 & 38 Norfolk Street.** A similar timber-framed and brick late 16th Century merchant's house and shop. Curious columnar pattern to the central glazing bars of the first-floor sashes.
- **Nos. 51-53 Norfolk Street.** Completely brick range of three early 17th Century combined shops and houses with good quadruple diamond flues to the chimney.
- **No. 61 Norfolk Street.** A brick late 17th Century house and shop.
- **Nos. 74 & 75 Norfolk Street.** A five-bay mid 18th Century composition with doorways right and left under acanthus hoods leading to the first-floor accommodation.
- **Nos. 99 & 100 Norfolk Street.** Interesting late 15th Century range of shops on the ground floor, accommodation above, of brick and timber framing, with later facades. Original passage to rear with an iron cullis.
- **Nos. 117-118 Norfolk Street.** Possibly one of the last timber-framed houses built in Lynn: Early 18th Century, with an early 19th Century brown brick façade.
- **Nos. 3-15 (odd) Portland Street.** Superior terrace of three storeys and basement of c. 1850 to house the middle classes in the expanding railway area of Lynn. Good Corinthian doorcases and area railings.

Important Unlisted Buildings

In common with almost all urban environments the character of Norfolk Street conservation area rests more with the nature of its unlisted buildings than with its listed

and scheduled ones. The listed buildings are highlights to a very consistent and worthwhile whole, especially obvious in the mid 19th Century terraces of the railway quarter, or of Marshall and Stanley Streets. The industrial past of the area can only be appreciated in other buildings: the warehouses in George Yard, and the excellent workshop next to No. 1 Marshall Street. A number of 19th Century shopfronts survive in Norfolk Street, a testimony to the retail aspects of this very important thoroughfare, and religious activity is represented by the former chapel at No. 26A Railway Road. Education is represented by the good National School of 1853 on Albion Street, and a great many buildings contribute by their greater scale and height set as punctuation marks at principal junctions.

Many buildings contribute by their close groupings into unified terraces of different periods – Albert Street and Avenue – or by their group value with listed buildings, for which most Norfolk Street premises qualify. Many are singled out on the accompanying plan, and others are so important that they only just fail to reach listable quality, such as the railings in front of the chapel on Blackfriars Street or the former church hall on Railway Road of 1888.

Post-War Development

Many of the areas immediately surrounding the conservation area owe their appearance and character to developments following the expansion of the population of King's Lynn in the early 1960s as a consequence of the London overspill scheme. In the years up to 1973 a large area in the centre of the town was redeveloped as a shopping area, with pedestrian malls and car parks. This means that the boundaries to the south of Norfolk

Street, west of Albion Street, south of Blackfriars Street, east of Blackfriars Road, east of Railway Road, north of Austin Street, and north and south of Littleport Street form barriers isolating the conservation area within it. Only to the south-east towards The Walks and west towards Tuesday Market Place are views which would be recognised by a resident of the 1950s. The environment in which the conservation area finds itself has therefore changed markedly so the streets facing the north and south-west extremities especially are frontier streets, apparently resisting encroachment by car parks and service blocks of department stores. In many places one can move from an historic area into more bleak and utilitarian brick, concrete and steel developments simply by crossing the street. Views out of the conservation area are particularly affected. Tree planting, especially in the Austin Street car parks, mitigates the effect to an extent, but the whole conservation area has an air of vulnerability.

Within the boundaries themselves development has taken two forms: reorganisation of traffic flow and infill development of redundant buildings. The main traffic scheme was the promotion of Austin Street into a major link road from John Kennedy Road to Littleport Street, diverting traffic from the eastern section of Norfolk Street, and the link between Railway Road and Austin Street, involving demolition of houses and workshop units which had evolved from the 17th Century. John Kennedy Road in its entire length is a completely new artery, but its effect is to allow straight and fast traffic access from London Road to the docks and the north Lynn suburbs, to the benefit of the remaining streets. The west end of Norfolk Street has been pedestrianised – one of the early

examples of this in England, (just after the first, London Street in Norwich), so Norfolk Street is much more shopper-friendly than it was in 1965.

Infill development or redevelopment began earlier, with the amalgamation of plots to form larger retail premises from the 1930s, especially at the west end of Norfolk Street, closest to the Market Place and therefore to the more commercially valuable sites. Of these, Holland & Barrett's store at the junction with Broad Street stands out as a building of local note,, but almost all the others were rebuilt with differing degrees of sympathy from the 1960s. The later they are, then the more sympathetic to the street scene. Between Chapel Street and John Kennedy Road 33.6% of building on the north side, and 27.2% on the south side is actually post-1965, and the fact that this is not at once obvious testifies to the underlying strength and unity of the 19th Century frontages and the mitigating scale of the street.

Railway Road has seen a great deal less rebuilding, but much greater disturbance of display windows and frontages, which is more destructive to historical character than complete replacement by carefully designed new buildings. Littleport Street has fared best in this respect, with just Edinburgh Court, while the railway quarter streets always supported mixed use, and the post-war buildings in fact replace sometimes ugly 19th Century industrial units. The later 1970s and

1980s saw the emphasis shift to restoration of older buildings rather than demolition, new facades exactly duplicating the original, and



refurbishment or replacement of residential units with similar units. Chapel Street has very good examples of this on the east side (Nos. 30-40 and Chapel Court), and in Portland Street stands Portland House, and in Waterloo Street Gainsborough Court.

Traditional Materials

Overwhelmingly the visible materials are red brick and Wisbech brown brick brought up by river, and slate for roofs. The slate only arrived in bulk from Wales after the railway opened in 1844, and its presence on roofs of older buildings generally indicates repair or rebuilding. Otherwise pantiles on buildings later than c.1720 and plaintiles on earlier structures are the rule. Timber framing does exist in the Norfolk Street area, but is hidden from view by later brick reskinning, though there is a jetty bressumer behind No. 104 Norfolk Street, visible from the Austin Street car park. Roof structures generally are of Baltic fir, imported through the port of Lynn from medieval times.

Archaeological Interest

There are three Scheduled Ancient Monuments in this area: the **town walls at Kettlewell Lane** (monument No. 174A), the **town wall at Wyatt Street** (monument No.237) and the **Littleport Street Bridge** (monument No. 303).



There have been many finds relating to construction and use of the walls, but no evidence of early settlement. At the site of new development at 74-78 Norfolk Street are the possible remains of a medieval quayside serving one of the cuts or fleets at this end of the street, and there is evidence of pottery kilns and trades of all kinds from the 13th Century.

Detractors

The special character of conservation areas can easily be eroded by seemingly minor alterations such as unsuitable replacement windows and doors, inappropriate materials or unsympathetic paintwork and the removal of walls, railings and trees. In a predominantly retail and commercial centre replacement of shop display windows is a particular problem, especially as the alteration is seldom necessary for structural

reasons, but for fashion and corporate identity, so that main shopping streets, as has long been lamented, eventually all look like each other. Norfolk Street in particular has so much depth of tradition, however, that this is still resisted. Nos. 26 & 69 have early 20th Century shop display windows, but the latter also has aluminium windows and concrete roof tiles. No. 68A has uPVC windows, as do Nos. 63-64, while Nos. 65-66 have concrete roof tiles again, and this cladding is found intermittently, and sometimes glaringly evident, through the length of the street. Even the listed No. 26 has concrete tiles.

In the main terrace of Waterloo Street, Nos. 4-11, none of the eight houses have their sash windows, only Nos. 9 & 10 their doors, but all of them their doorcases and all except 5 and 11 their slate roofs. The listed terrace in Portland Street, Nos. 3-15 (odds) has original sashes to four of the seven houses, doors to six and doorcases to five. The section on the west side of Railway road between Albion Street and Old Market Street (nine premises) boasts slate roofs to five, original sashes only to the first floor of No. 25, and an original door only to No. 22. These statistics may be repeated in all directions, but there are other detractors.

Intrusive street signing blocks the view west into Norfolk Street at the Austin Street/Littleport Street junction, at the south end of Railway Road and intermittently along the course of this road at the junctions to the west. Outside No. 17 Portland Street is a telephone distribution pylon.

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Conservation Objectives

The overall conservation objective is to protect and reinforce the established special character of Conservation Areas and their setting.

This will be achieved by:

- Encouraging the retention and maintenance of buildings which contribute to the overall character of each conservation area
- Ensuring that new development is sympathetic to the special qualities and character of each conservation area
- Protecting the setting of the conservation area from development which adversely affects views into or out of the area
- The retention, maintenance and locally appropriate new planting of trees
- Maintaining and enhancing local features and details which contribute towards an area's local distinctiveness
- Working with the community to prepare schemes of enhancement
- Encouraging the removal of detractors to the special character of each conservation area

Contacts and advice

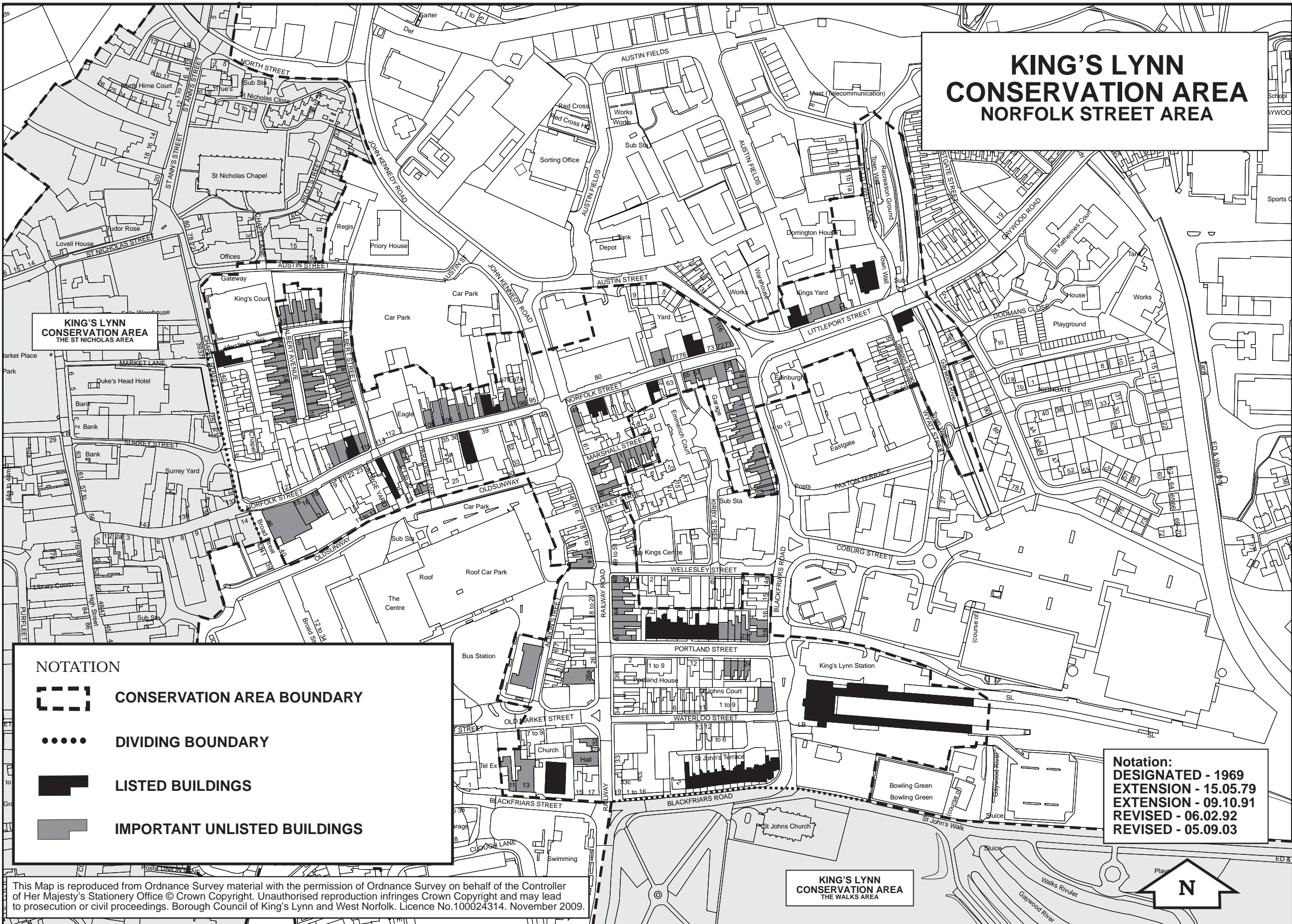
Within conservation areas, a number of special controls apply and it is advisable that anyone proposing to carry out new development, alteration, extensions, installations or demolition should seek advice from Development Services at an early stage. Special controls also apply to the trees and some may be subject to Tree Preservation Orders. Anyone wishing to carry out work to trees within a Conservation Area should therefore seek advice from Development Services.

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KING'S LYNN CONSERVATION AREA NORFOLK STREET AREA



NOTATION

-  CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY
-  DIVIDING BOUNDARY
-  LISTED BUILDINGS
-  IMPORTANT UNLISTED BUILDINGS

Notation:
 DESIGNATED - 15.05.79
 EXTENSION - 09.10.91
 REVISED - 06.02.92
 REVISED - 05.09.03

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KING'S LYNN
CONSERVATION AREA
THE WALKS AREA

