

# King's Lynn Urban Archaeological Database

## Project Report



Dr Richard Hoggett and Alice Cattermole  
Alice Cattermole Heritage Consultancy

Historic England Project No. 7656

March 2022

## Document Control Grid

Project Name and HE reference number	King's Lynn Urban Archaeological Database Project No: 7656
Author(s) and contact details	Richard Hoggett and Alice Cattermole Alice Cattermole Heritage Consultancy <a href="mailto:alice@alicecattermole.co.uk">alice@alicecattermole.co.uk</a> 07900 272524
Origination Date	01/03/2022
Reviser(s)	Richard Hoggett and Alice Cattermole
Date of last revision	04/04/2022
Version	1
Summary of Changes	Completed Draft

# Contents

List of Figures .....	ii
Abbreviations .....	v
A Note on Nomenclature .....	vi
1. Introduction .....	1
2. The King's Lynn Urban Archaeological Database Project .....	3
2.1 King's Lynn Heritage Action Zone .....	3
2.2 The Norfolk Historic Environment Record .....	4
2.3 The King's Lynn UAD Area .....	6
3. A Long History of Research .....	19
4. The Archaeology of King's Lynn .....	28
4.1 Occupation Pre-Dating the Town.....	28
4.2 The Origins of the Town.....	33
4.3 The Newlands.....	37
4.4 The Medieval Waterfront .....	40
4.5 Friars and Pilgrims.....	45
4.6 The Medieval Defences.....	47
4.7 The Civil War .....	51
4.8 The Post-Medieval Town .....	54
5. Conclusion: Managing King's Lynn's Historic Environment .....	79
5.1 The King's Lynn UAD .....	79
5.2 Existing Heritage Designations.....	80
5.3 Archaeological Character Areas .....	92
Bibliography .....	104

## List of Figures

Figure 1.	The King's Lynn UAD area in relation to the wider administrative area of the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. Scale 1:350,000. ....	10
Figure 2.	The King's Lynn UAD area in relation to the modern map of King's Lynn. Scale 1:50,000. ....	11
Figure 3.	The King's Lynn UAD area in relation to the modern aerial photograph of King's Lynn. Scale 1:50,000. ....	12
Figure 4.	The King's Lynn UAD area shown against local topography derived from 1m-resolution Digital Surface Model LIDAR data captured in 2018. Scale 1:50,000. ....	13
Figure 5.	The King's Lynn UAD area shown against local topography derived from 1m-resolution Digital Terrain Model LIDAR data captured in 2018. Scale 1:50,000. ....	14
Figure 6.	HER monument records within the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:50,000. ....	15
Figure 7.	Detailed view of the HER monument records within the historic core of King's Lynn. Scale 1:10,000. ....	16
Figure 8.	HER event records within the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:50,000. ....	17
Figure 9.	Detailed view of the HER event records within the historic core of King's Lynn. Scale 1:10,000. ....	18
Figure 10.	A cross-section of the Red Mount Chapel after a drawing by the Rev. Edward Edwards, published in 1811. ....	20
Figure 11.	The three volumes on the Making of King's Lynn series presenting the published results of the King's Lynn Archaeological Survey. ....	23
Figure 12.	The façade of 30 Queen Street with render removed in January 1977. ....	25
Figure 13.	The remains of 30 Queen Street on 12 <sup>th</sup> January 1977. ....	25
Figure 14.	The three Historic England Research Reports produced as part of the King's Lynn HAZ programme. ....	27
Figure 15.	Salterns recorded within and around the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:50,000. ....	32
Figure 16.	Aerial view of St Margaret's church from the south-east. The associated priory precinct lay to the south of the church and the Saturday Market to the north. ....	34
Figure 17.	Sketch-map reconstruction of the natural banks in King's Lynn on which the town was founded produced by the King's Lynn Archaeological Survey. ....	35
Figure 18.	Aerial view of St James's chapel from the south-west. ....	36
Figure 19.	Sketch plan of the Newelond in 1279, showing streets mentioned in the 'Newelond Survey'. ....	39



Figure 20.	Aerial view of the waterfront of the historic core of King's Lynn, between the Purfleet (left) and the Millfleet (right), looking east. ....	40
Figure 21.	Map of King's Lynn produced by the King's Lynn Archaeological Survey showing the changing medieval riverline. ....	43
Figure 22.	Aerial view of the waterfront of the historic core of King's Lynn north of the Purfleet (right), looking east, showing the linear rearward expansion of the plots fronting onto King Street. ....	44
Figure 23.	Aerial view of the Greyfriars tower within the Tower Gardens, looking west. ....	44
Figure 24.	Aerial view of the Red Mount Chapel, looking north-east. ....	47
Figure 25.	Reconstruction plan of King's Lynn produced by the King's Lynn Archaeological Survey showing the medieval and post-medieval defences. ....	48
Figure 26.	Drawing of the 'South Gate, King's Lynn' by Sir Muirhead Bone, 1904. ....	51
Figure 27.	A stylised pictorial map of King's Lynn redrawn from a map of Rising Chase dating from 1588. ....	53
Figure 28.	Wenceslaus Hollar's 'Prospect of Kings Lyn from the West' and 'Groundplat of King's Lyn' of about 1660. ....	56
Figure 29.	Detail of Wenceslaus Hollar's 'Groundplat of King's Lyn' of about 1660. ....	57
Figure 30.	Detail of Wenceslaus Hollar's 'Prospect of King's Lyn from the West' of about 1660. ....	58
Figure 31.	Detail of Wenceslaus Hollar's 'Prospect of King's Lyn from the West' of about 1660. ....	59
Figure 32.	Henry Bell's version of the 'Groundplat of King's Lyn' of about 1680. ....	60
Figure 33.	Rastrick's 'Ichnographia Burgi perantiqui Lennae Regis' of 1725. ....	62
Figure 34.	Aerial view of the Purfleet, looking east, showing the Custom House. ....	63
Figure 35.	The Buck Brothers' 'East Prospect of Lynn-Regis', published in 1741. ....	64
Figure 36.	Detail of the Buck Brothers' 'East Prospect of Lynn-Regis', published in 1741. ....	65
Figure 37.	Detail of the Buck Brothers' 'East Prospect of Lynn-Regis', published in 1741. ....	66
Figure 38.	Inset map of King's Lynn from Faden's Map of Norfolk, published in 1797. ....	68
Figure 39.	Burnet's plan of King's Lynn of 1846. ....	71
Figure 40.	King's Lynn depicted on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey six-inch-to-one-mile map, surveyed in 1884 and published in 1886. ....	73
Figure 41.	Detail of the Tuesday Market Place from the Ordnance Survey Town Plan, published in 1886. ....	74
Figure 42.	Detail of the railway station from the Ordnance Survey Town Plan, published in 1886. ....	74
Figure 43.	Aerial view of King the Port of King's Lynn, looking east, with the Alexandra Dock in the foreground and the Bentinck Dock beyond. ....	76

Figure 44.	Scheduled Monuments within the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:10,000. ....	82
Figure 45.	Registered Parks and Gardens within the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:10,000.....	83
Figure 46.	Listed Buildings within the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:50,000.....	85
Figure 47.	Detailed view of Listed Buildings within the historic core of King's Lynn. Scale 1:10,000. .....	86
Figure 48.	Detailed view of the Conservation Area within the historic core of King's Lynn, together with Listed Buildings. Scale 1:10,000. ....	88
Figure 49.	Archaeological Character Areas within the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:50,000. ....	94
Figure 50.	Detailed view of Archaeological Character Areas within the historic core of King's Lynn. Scale 1:10,000. ....	95

## Abbreviations

BCKLWN	Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
GIS	Geographical Information System
HAZ	Heritage Action Zone
HE	Historic England
HER	Historic Environment Record
I&RS	Finds Identification and Recording Service
NHER	Norfolk Historic Environment Record
KLAS	King's Lynn Archaeological Survey
KLUS	King's Lynn Under Siege
NCC	Norfolk County Council
NHE	Norfolk Heritage Explorer
NMP	National Mapping Programme
PAS	Portable Antiquities Scheme
RAI	Royal Archaeological Institute
RCZAS	Rapid Coastal Zone Archaeological Survey
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
SPAB	Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database

## A Note on Nomenclature

The town which we now know as King's Lynn was recorded as *Lun* and *Lena* in the Domesday survey of 1086, and later referred to as *Linn*. The town was officially known as Bishop's Lynn – *Lynn Episcopi* – from the late 11<sup>th</sup> century and only became King's Lynn – *Lynn Regis* – in 1538. For the sake of simplicity, the town is referred to as King's Lynn throughout this report.

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Situated in west Norfolk on the mouth of the Great Ouse, where it empties into the south-eastern corner of the Wash, the medieval town of King's Lynn grew up on the eastern bank of the river. Throughout the medieval period, King's Lynn was one of the most important ports and commercial centres on the east coast. This brought great wealth to the town, which is reflected in its historic environment, particularly in its surviving historic buildings and its rich archaeological record. The town's low-lying position and the intensity of the medieval and post-medieval activity within it, particularly on the waterfront, mean that there is high potential for deeply stratified, waterlogged archaeological deposits with associated artefacts and environmental remains. A detailed understanding of the archaeological record of the town, and in particular the depth, date and character of its underlying archaeological deposits is crucial if the historic environment is to be managed effectively and sites earmarked for development are to be unlocked.
- 1.2 This report presents the results of the King's Lynn Urban Archaeological Database project (Historic England Project No. 7656), which was delivered by Alice Cattermole Heritage Consultancy between March 2018 and March 2022, a period which encompassed the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Undertaken as part of the wider King's Lynn Heritage Action Zone initiative (HAZ), the project has resulted in the creation within the existing Norfolk Historic Environment Record (HER) of an Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) for the town and its hinterland. The new UAD captures and synthesises our knowledge of the buried archaeology and built heritage of the area, providing a historic environment management tool which informs planning decision-making and supports the delivery of housing and growth within the town. The existence of the UAD also allows for more effective responses to threats to the historic environment to be given in a timely manner by local authorities and Historic England. Finally, all of the data contained within the UAD has been placed in the public domain via the Norfolk Heritage Explorer website<sup>1</sup> and the Heritage Gateway website,<sup>2</sup> raising awareness, interest in and understanding of King's Lynn's rich past.
- 1.3 The following section sets out the background to the King's Lynn UAD project, including the physical geography of the UAD study area. Section 3 presents an overview of the long history of antiquarian, archaeological and historical research which informs the content of the UAD. Section 4 presents an overview of the development of King's Lynn, as it is evidenced by the

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>

content of the UAD. Section 5 presents the conclusions of this report, and identifies a number of archaeological character areas which reflect our understanding of the archaeological record of the UAD area.

- 1.4 Throughout the report, references are made to records contained within the Norfolk Historic Environment Record, which are prefaced with 'NHER', and the footnotes contain links to the online versions of these records hosted on the Norfolk Heritage Explorer website.

## 2. The King's Lynn Urban Archaeological Database Project

2.0.1 As part of the King's Lynn Heritage Action Zone programme, the King's Lynn Urban Archaeological Database was created within the existing framework of the Norfolk Historic Environment Record between March 2018 and March 2022 (Historic England Project No. 7676). This section sets out the wider context of the King's Lynn Heritage Action Zone and presents an overview of the Norfolk Historic Environment Record, before setting out the extent of the UAD study area and its physical character.

### 2.1 King's Lynn Heritage Action Zone

2.1.1 Delivered under the slogan 'Breathing Life into Old Places', the aim of Historic England's Heritage Action Zones (HAZ) scheme was to undertake joint-working with local partners, offer grant funding and promote skills-sharing in order to 'unleash the power of the historic environment to create economic growth and improve quality of life in villages, towns and cities across England'.<sup>3</sup>

2.1.2 King's Lynn was one of the first ten Heritage Action Zones announced in 2017. With its rich history, King's Lynn is an attractive place to live, work and visit, while its strategic location on the road and rail network and role as the principal town in west Norfolk mean that plans are being made for significant housing and economic growth in the near future.<sup>4</sup>

2.1.3 Led by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, working in collaboration with the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership, the West Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, King's Lynn Town Centre Partnership & Business Improvement District, Norfolk County Council and Historic England, the five-year HAZ initiative was designed to turn what could be seen as a threat into an opportunity to show how well-designed new development which works with historic King's Lynn can reinforce the economic, social and environmental vitality of this modern medieval town.<sup>5</sup>

2.1.4 The King's Lynn HAZ was delivered under six interrelated project strands:

1. Researching the history of key sites in King's Lynn to inform future new development;
2. Review King's Lynn's listed buildings to improve knowledge;
3. Design new developments to reinforce the importance of historic King's Lynn;

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/breathe-new-life-into-old-places-through-heritage-action-zones/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20010/regeneration/932/heritage\\_action\\_zone](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20010/regeneration/932/heritage_action_zone)

<sup>5</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/kings-lynn/>

4. Find economic uses for underused historic town-centre buildings;
5. Bringing historic buildings back into use;
6. Programme of community events exploring historic King's Lynn and its future.

The creation of the King's Lyn UAD was undertaken as part of the first of these strands, but also addressed issues pertaining to the knowledge of the town's listed buildings (strand 2) and is used to inform the design of new developments within the town (strand 3). In addition to these development-focussed aims, the results of the project (including this report) have also been placed in the public domain and have been supported by a number of in-person and online talks, which have promoted the King's Lynn UAD to a wider public audience.<sup>6</sup>

## 2.2 The Norfolk Historic Environment Record

- 2.2.1 The Norfolk Historic Environment Record (HER), formerly known as the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), is the definitive database of the county's archaeological sites and historic buildings. At the time of writing, it contains nearly 67,000 records describing the archaeology of Norfolk from the earliest evidence for human occupation, dating from 980,000 BC, to the present day.
- 2.2.2 Much of the information on the earliest discoveries in the county was compiled by Roy Rainbird Clarke, first while he was the local correspondent liaising with the Ordnance Survey's Archaeological Officer O.G.S. Crawford, and later as Curator of Norwich Castle Museum, a position which he held until his death in 1963. His notes and index cards formed the basis of the original Norfolk SMR, and museum staff continued to add to these records after his death. Archaeological sites and finds recorded at the King's Lynn museum were integrated into the Norfolk SMR in the 1970s.
- 2.2.3 Initially held as record cards with accompanying annotated maps, the records began to be computerised in 1984 and by the early 1990s the database was digital. During the early 2000s, the annotated maps were also digitised, the database began to be stored in a Geographical Information System (GIS) and the system became known as the Norfolk HER. Like many HER's across the country, the database and digital mapping elements of the Norfolk HER are created and managed using the HBSMR software package produced by Exegesis Spatial Data Management Ltd.<sup>7</sup> These are supported by a vast collection of archive

---

<sup>6</sup> [https://youtu.be/\\_AMjTILq86A](https://youtu.be/_AMjTILq86A)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.esdm.co.uk/hbsmr-historic-environment>



material, which includes thousands of archaeological reports, aerial photographs and artefact drawings, much of which is also currently in the process of being digitised. A substantial proportion of the records from the Norfolk HER was made available online via the Norfolk Heritage Explorer website<sup>8</sup> and the Heritage Gateway website<sup>9</sup> in 2007, together with a vast quantity of supporting interpretive material, and these online records continue to be updated on a regular basis.

2.2.4 The Norfolk HER contains details of over 27,000 archaeological sites, which represent the results of over 200 years of antiquarian and archaeological fieldwork in the county. These are complemented by an equal number of artefact findspots, identified and recorded by staff at the county's museums from the 1940s onwards and subsequently by Norfolk County Council's Finds Identification and Recording Service (I&RS). Of particular note is the fact that since the emergence of metal-detecting as a hobby in the early 1970s, the local authority has maintained a very positive relationship with the detectorist community, resulting in the recording of a large number of metal artefacts. Since the late 1990s, this approach has continued under the auspices of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS).<sup>10</sup> The Norfolk HER also contains details of nearly 12,000 historic buildings, which includes all of the listed buildings in the county, and a considerable number of additional buildings which are of historical significance.

2.2.5 The Norfolk HER, like all HERs, is maintained and updated for public benefit in accordance with national and international standards and guidance.<sup>11</sup> The information held in the Norfolk HER underpins historic environment management processes, conservation, fieldwork, and research in the county. It also provides a valuable source of information for local communities. In turn, many of these activities generate new information which feeds back to the HER in the form of reports and archives which are then used to enhance the records. For example, the heritage data contained within an HER are used for a variety of purposes, including to:

- advance knowledge and understanding of the historic environment;
- inform its care and conservation;
- inform public policies and decision-making on land-use planning and management;

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://finds.org.uk/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/ifp/Wiki.jsp?page=Main>

- contribute to environmental improvement and economic regeneration;
- contribute to education and social inclusion;
- encourage participation in the exploration, appreciation and enjoyment of the historic environment.

2.2.6 In order to further increase the understanding of King's Lynn's historic environment and ensure that this knowledge informed strategic decision-making across the Borough, the King's Lynn Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) was created within the existing framework of the Norfolk HER.

## 2.3 The King's Lynn UAD Area

2.3.1 One of a series of urban characterisation tools, a UAD provides a comprehensive and dynamic record of archaeological excavations and discoveries within a town or city at a more detailed level than that typically adopted for an HER. Typically, a UAD will also include details of individual buildings and structures – houses, commercial, civic, religious and industrial buildings, streets and railways – whether past or present.<sup>12</sup> Since the 1990s, UADs have been created for approximately 30 historic towns and cities with rich and complex below-ground archaeology, including regional examples for Norwich, Ipswich and Cambridge. Although a few UADs were created as stand-alone records, in most cases these have since been integrated into the HER which covers the area in question.<sup>13</sup> Like HERs, UADs can be used to assess the archaeological potential and importance of proposed development sites in order to inform planning decisions and strategic management of the historic environment, as well as providing an educational and research tool.

2.3.2 The location of the King's Lynn UAD area within the wider administrative area of the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (BCKLWN) is depicted in Figure 1, while a more detailed view of the UAD boundary in relation to the urban area of King's Lynn is depicted in Figure 2. The boundary of the UAD was agreed by the project team, the Borough Council, Historic England and the managers of the Norfolk HER at the beginning of the project. The King's Lynn UAD covers an area of 26.5 km<sup>2</sup> and encompasses the historic core of the town, as well as many of the town's suburbs and surrounding industrial estates. The modern landscape character of the UAD area, particularly the separate and distinct areas of urban, residential and industrial development within it, are clearly visible in modern aerial photographs of the town and its environs (Figure 3). As can be seen in Figures 2 and 3, the

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Urban\\_archaeological\\_database\\_\(UAD\)](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Urban_archaeological_database_(UAD))

<sup>13</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/characterisation/urban-characterisation/>

northern boundary of the UAD area takes in the Port of King's Lynn, the Riverside Industrial Estate, the North Lynn Industrial Estate and the settlements of South and North Wootton. The eastern boundary follows the lines of the A148 Grimston Road to the Knight's Hill roundabout, then follows the A149 Queen Elizabeth Way southwards to the Hardwick roundabout, from where it follows the A47 to its junction for North Runcton. The southern boundary of the UAD area skirts around the north of North Runcton and extends southwards along the A10 to incorporate West Winch, as well as taking in the Hardwick Narrow Industrial Estate and the Saddlebow Industrial Estate. The western boundary of the UAD area follows the eastern bank of the Ouse, crossing the river to take in the settlement area of West Lynn and the East Coast Business Park on the western bank of the river.

- 2.3.3 Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the present-day topography of the King's Lynn UAD area, derived from 1m-resolution Lidar data dating from 2018 provided by the Environment Agency.<sup>14</sup> Figure 4 presents a Digital Surface Model, which includes details for all of the built structures within the UAD area, while Figure 5 presents a Digital Terrain Model, in which the built structures have been digitally processed out in order to create a smoother model of the underlying ground surface. As can be seen, the majority of the UAD area comprises relatively flat, low-lying ground situated between 2m and 10m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), with the ground level rising to between 15m and 25m aOD in the south-eastern eastern and north-eastern parts of the UAD area. Figures 4 and 5 also clearly illustrate the fact that the historic core of King's Lynn lies upon slightly higher ground than its immediate hinterland, which to the north, south and east of the town comprises low-lying ground incorporating the river valleys of the Gaywood to the north-east and the Nar to the south-east, together with the small watercourses of the Purfleet and Millfleet. As is discussed further below in the context of the origins of the town, the presence of these watercourses and the slight elevation of the ground on which the town stands, which itself may be natural or result from human activity, were of great significance to the historical development of King's Lynn as a riverside port.
- 2.3.4 The topography of the King's Lynn UAD area is a product of the underlying geology, with the bedrock across the majority of the lower-lying parts of the UAD area being categorised by the British Geological Survey as mudstone belonging to the Kimmeridge Clay Formation (157–152 million years old).<sup>15</sup> At the northern and eastern extents of the UAD area, where the land rises, are outcrops of sandstone bedrock of the Roxham and Runcton Members

---

<sup>14</sup> <https://environment.data.gov.uk/DefraDataDownload/?Mode=survey>

<sup>15</sup> <https://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

(152–145 million years old) on the valley slopes, which in turn give way to the younger sandstone of the Mintlyn Member (145–134 million years old), Leziate Member (139–134 million years) and the sandstone and mudstone of the Dersingham Formation (134–126 million years old ) in the highest points of the north-eastern corner of the UAD area.

- 2.3.5 The bedrock is overlain by superficial geology, which across the vast majority of the UAD area comprises the clay and silt tidal flat deposits which cover the full extent of the Fenland basin to the west, well into Cambridgeshire and across much of Lincolnshire. These deposits are broadly flat and can be up to 10m thick in places. Within the eastern part of the UAD area, as the ground starts to rise, the superficial geology is characterised by north-south bands of raised beach deposits and head deposits, representing the remains of the former shoreline which was later cut off from the rivers and the sea. Further inland, peat deposits are found within the within the low-lying river valleys of the Gaywood and the Nar.
- 2.3.6 From this geology are derived the main soil types of the UAD area, which are characterised by Cranfield University's Land Information System (LandIS).<sup>16</sup> Across the low-lying parts of the UAD area, these soils comprise the dark, deep, silty soils of the Wisbech (0812b) and Agney (0812c) soil associations, while within the Gaywood and Nar river valleys these give way to the more clayey soils of the Wallasea 2 (0813g) soil association. Within the North Wootton area, the soils belong to the sandy and loamy soils of the Blackwood (0821g) soil association, while to the south, in the West Winch area, lies the northern extent of the iron-rich sandy and loamy soils of the Downham (0555) soil association. On the higher ground of the eastern edge of the UAD area, around Knight's Hill and Gayton Road, are the deep, well-drained, sandy soils of the Newport 4 (0551g) soil association, which characterise much of west Norfolk.
- 2.3.7 Such, then, is the physical geography of the King's Lynn UAD area, against which background humans have settled and exploited the landscape from the Palaeolithic period onwards. The UAD area contains archaeological evidence dating from the full range of human occupation, although, as might be expected, the vast majority of this evidence pertains to the medieval and post-medieval periods during which the town and port of King's Lynn thrived. Following the creation of the King's Lynn UAD within the Norfolk HER, at the time of writing the UAD area contains 1,201 monument records, of which 249 (20.7%) are new records created as part of this project; in addition, the remaining 952 pre-existing records (79.3%) have all been enhanced significantly. The digital mapping for each of these records has also been

---

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.landis.org.uk/>

enhanced and, where possible, the extent presented as a polygon (Figures 6 and 7). Within this total are represented details of 464 known archaeological sites or monuments (38.6%), 241 artefact findspots (20%) and 442 historic buildings (36.8%). The remainder of the records is represented by structures, such as bollards (14; 1%), maritime records (2; 0.16%), a designed landscape (1 ; 0.08%) and 'negative evidence', that is, sites where fieldwork revealed no archaeological remains (37; 3.08%). In addition to the monument records, the UAD area now also contains 549 event records, which detail episodes of archaeological fieldwork or discovery. Of these, 289 (52%) have been newly created during the project and the remaining 260 events have been greatly enhanced (Figures 8 and 9).

- 2.3.8 All of the records contained within the UAD are the result of a long history of antiquarian, archaeological and architectural investigation within the town and its environs. The creation of the King's Lynn UAD has resulted in the addition of 179 additional bibliographic source records to the Norfolk HER, capturing information not previously recorded in the database, and the modification of 442 existing bibliographic source records. In order to provide a fuller context for the material integrated into the UAD, the next section presents an overview of the rich array of historical and archaeological sources which have been drawn upon during the course of the UAD project to inform our understanding of the historic town and its development.

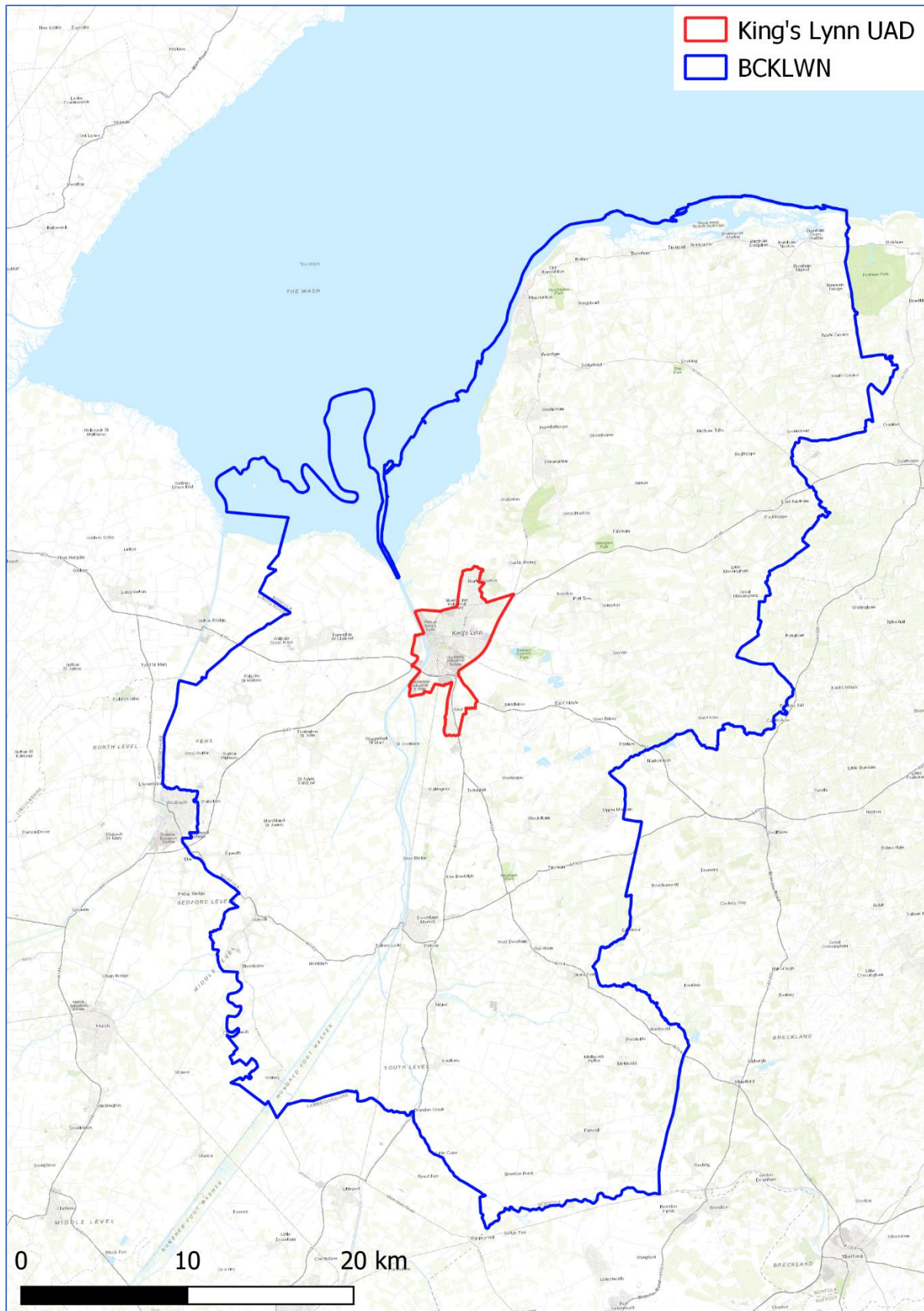


Figure 1. The King's Lynn UAD area in relation to the wider administrative area of the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. Scale 1:350,000. (Contains ESRI World Topo data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/519/>)



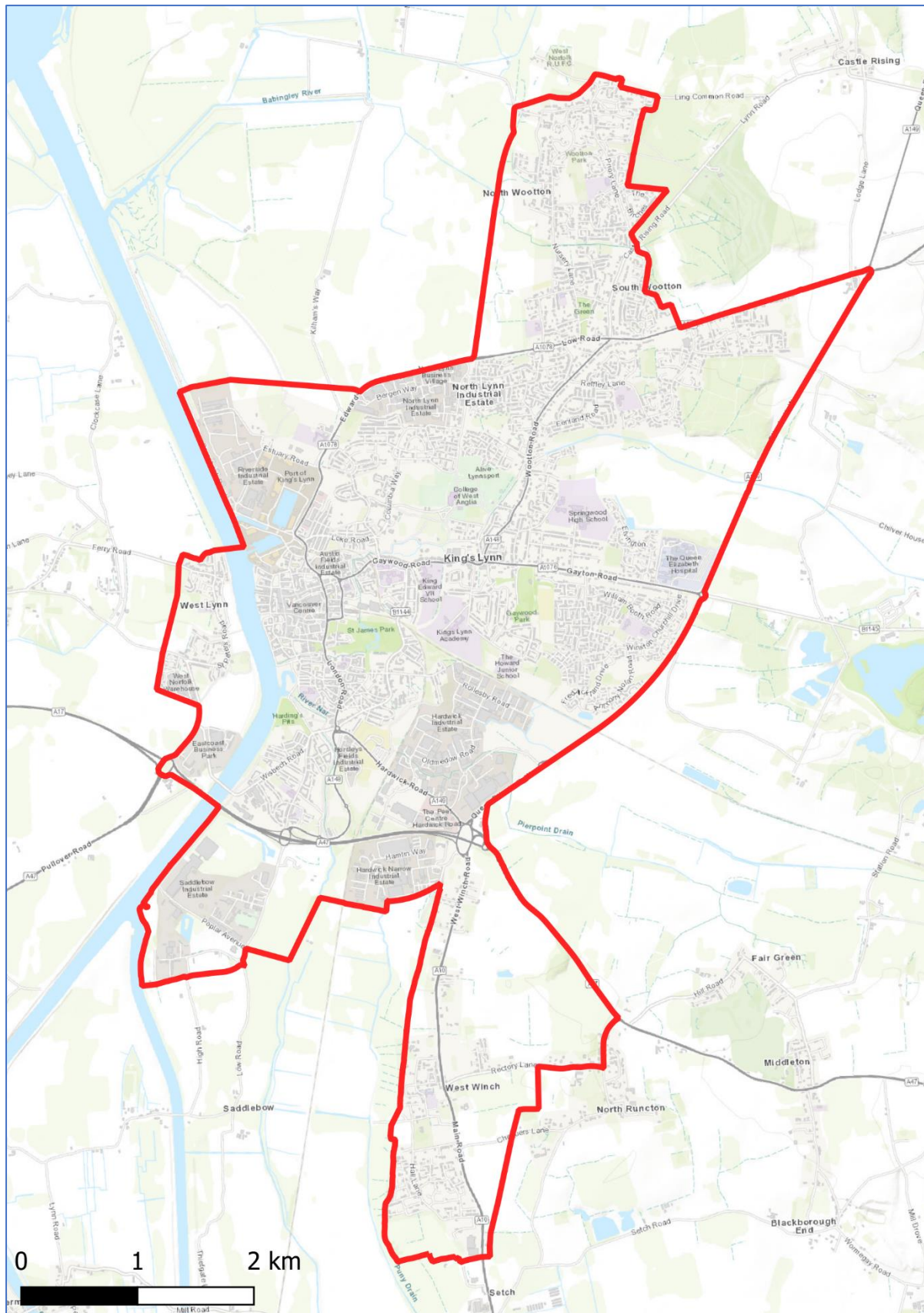


Figure 2. The King's Lynn UAD area in relation to the modern map of King's Lynn. Scale 1:50,000. (Contains ESRI World Topo data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/519/>)





Figure 3. The King's Lynn UAD area in relation to the modern aerial photograph of King's Lynn. Scale 1:50,000. (Contains ESRI World Imagery (Clarity) Beta data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/1606/>)



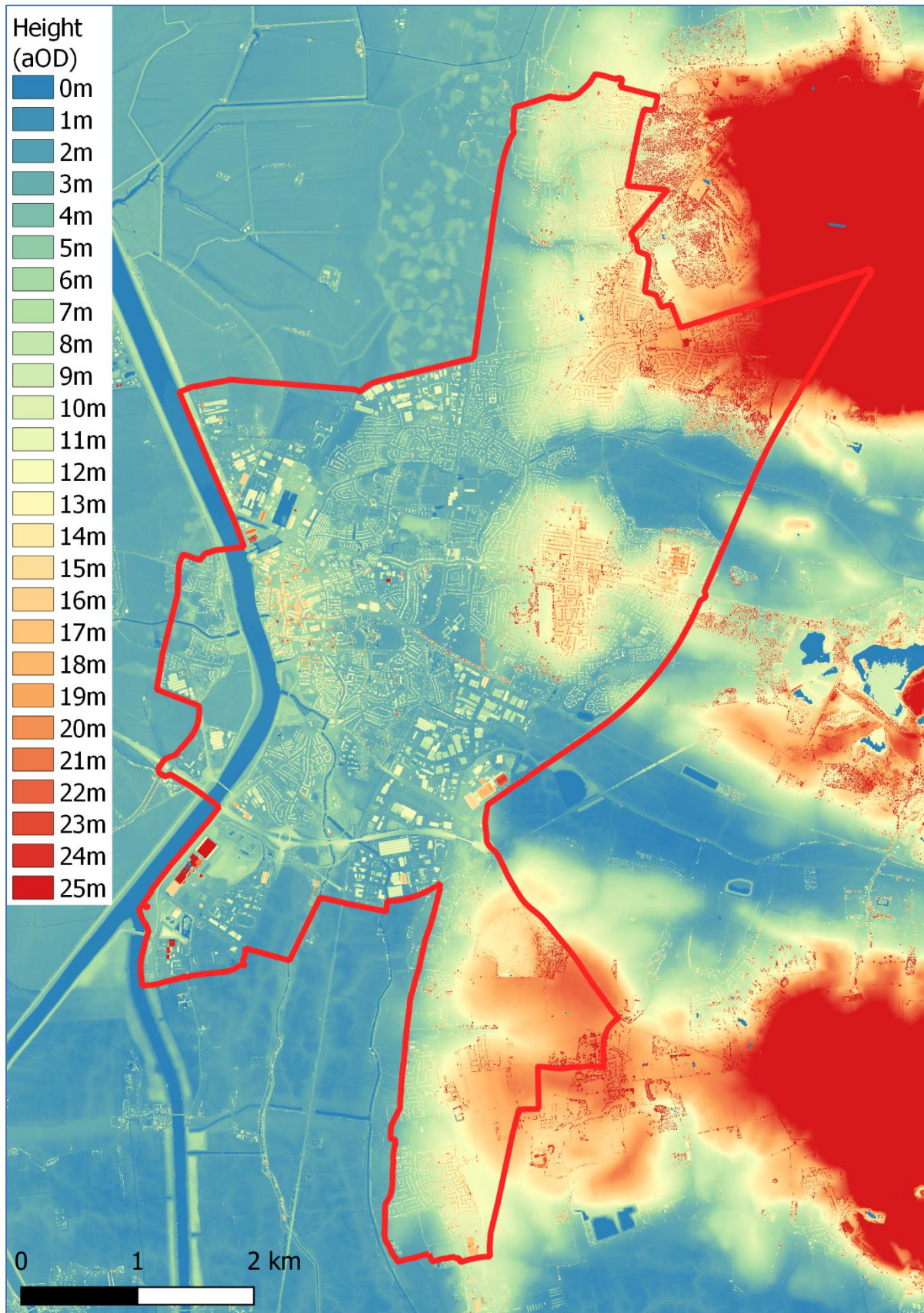


Figure 4. The King's Lynn UAD area shown against local topography derived from 1m-resolution Digital Surface Model LIDAR data captured in 2018. Scale 1:50,000. (LIDAR data © Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2018)



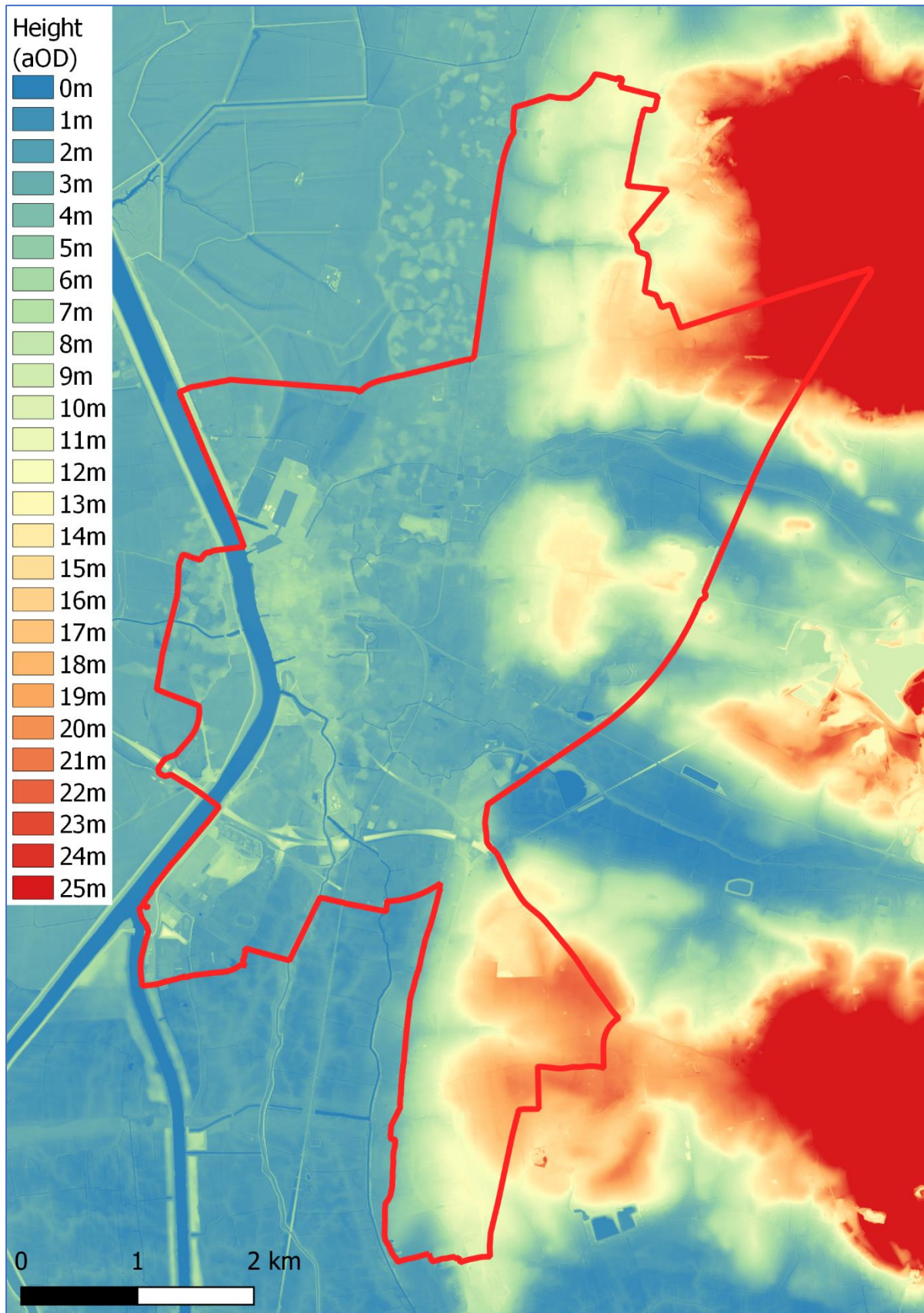


Figure 5. The King's Lynn UAD area shown against local topography derived from 1m-resolution Digital Terrain Model LIDAR data captured in 2018. Scale 1:50,000. (LIDAR data © Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2018)



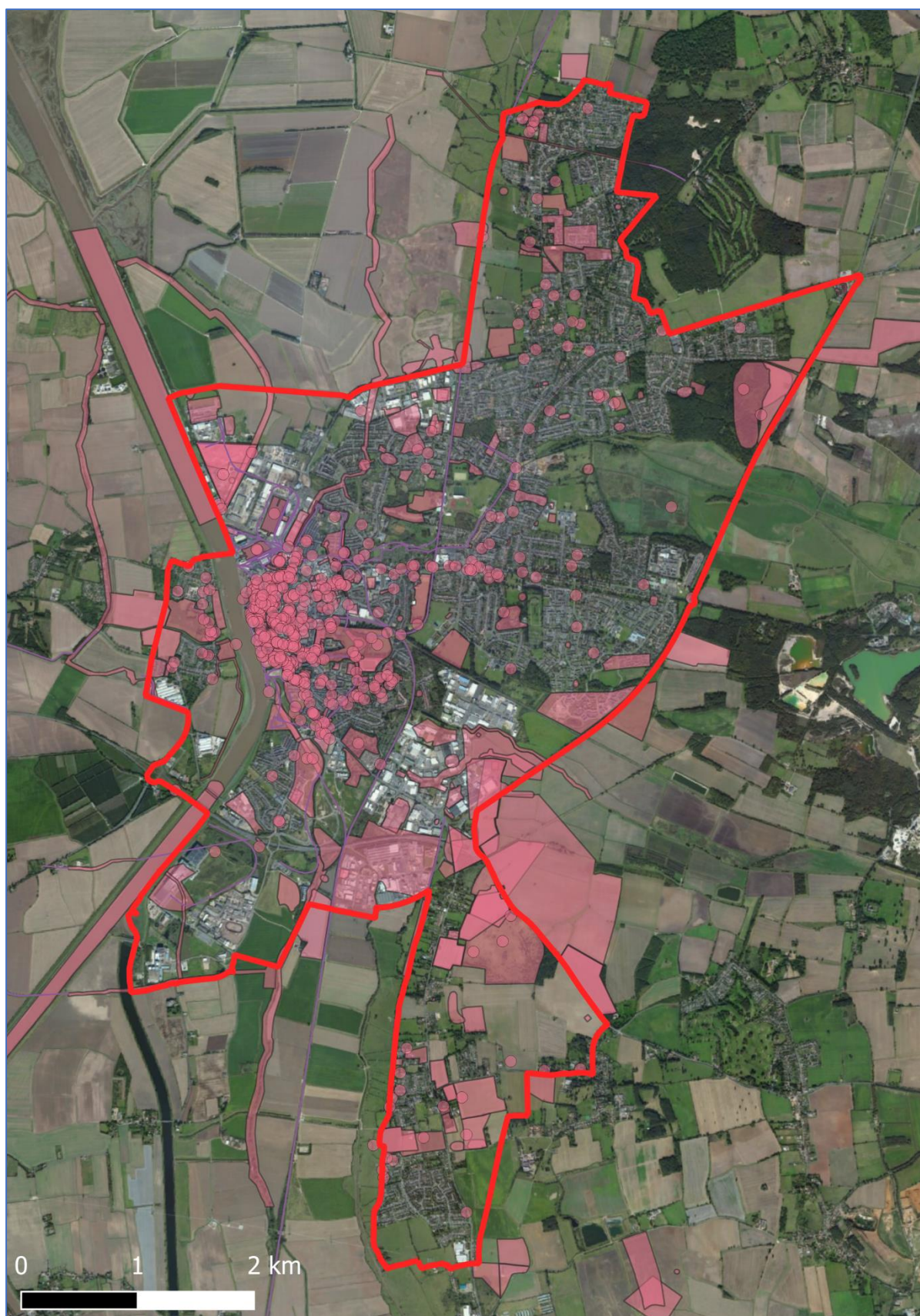


Figure 6. HER monument records within the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:50,000. (HER data © Norfolk County Council; Contains ESRI World Imagery (Clarity) Beta data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/1606/>)





Figure 7. Detailed view of the HER monument records within the historic core of King's Lynn. Scale 1:10,000. (HER data © Norfolk County Council; Contains ESRI World Imagery (Clarity) Beta data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/1606/>)



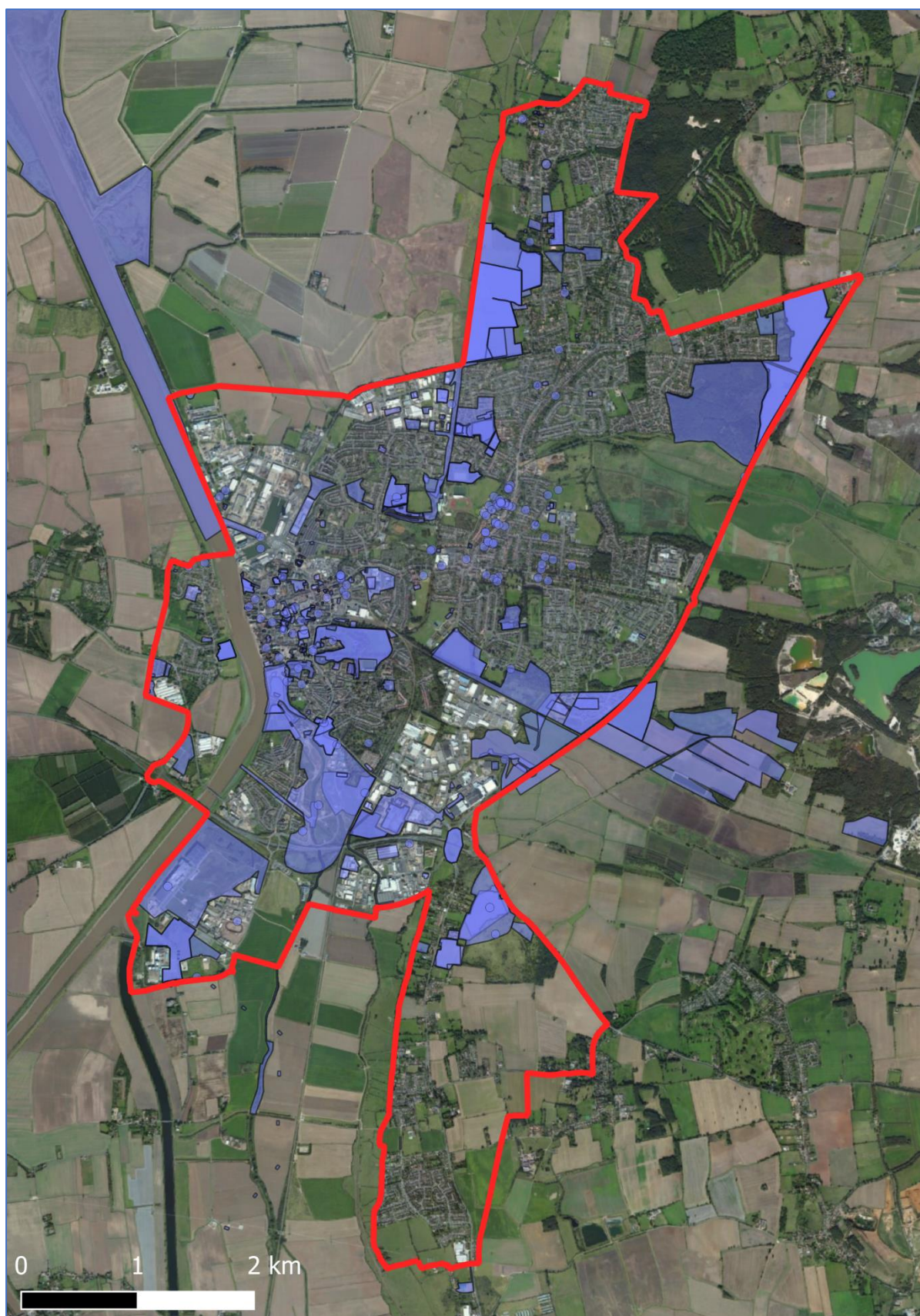


Figure 8. HER event records within the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:50,000. (HER data © Norfolk County Council; Contains ESRI World Imagery (Clarity) Beta data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/1606/>)





Figure 9. Detailed view of the HER event records within the historic core of King's Lynn. Scale 1:10,000. (HER data © Norfolk County Council; Contains ESRI World Imagery (Clarity) Beta data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/1606/>)



### 3. A Long History of Research

- 3.1 Any attempt to understand and interpret the history and development of King's Lynn is able to draw upon a rich documentary and archaeological record, and a long tradition of historical or archaeological research into the town and its environs. Several detailed political and administrative histories of the town were published in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and these were increasingly complemented by antiquarian, archaeological and architectural investigations. Such studies intensified during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, culminating in the 1960s with the King's Lynn Archaeological Survey (KLAS), and fieldwork undertaken during the subsequent 60 years has added greatly to our archaeological knowledge of the town. The creation of the King's Lynn UAD has presented an opportunity to bring together this disparate material and incorporate it into the wider framework of the Norfolk HER, so that it can inform decisions affecting King's Lynn's historic environment in the future.
- 3.2 Among the earliest histories of the town is Benjamin Mackerell's *History and Antiquities of the Flourishing Corporation of King's Lynn*, published in 1738,<sup>17</sup> and Francis Blomefield considered the histories of Lynn, West Lynn, North Lynn and South Lynn at length in his *Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*.<sup>18</sup> This was followed in 1812 by William Richards' two-volume *History of Lynn*<sup>19</sup> and in 1844 by William Taylor's *Antiquities of King's Lynn*.<sup>20</sup> Studies were put on a more topographical footing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by Edward Beloe, whose article on the 'Making of Lynn' was published in 1895,<sup>21</sup> and followed by a more detailed account, *Our Borough, Our Churches*, in 1899.<sup>22</sup> In 1907, Henry Hillen produced his own two-part *History of the Borough of King's Lynn*,<sup>23</sup> which represented the first attempt at a comprehensive history of the town and his work, in particular, has informed much of the research undertaken during the last century.
- 3.3 Archaeological discoveries have been made in King's Lynn since the emergence of antiquarianism in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Notable early examples of such work include the recording and excavation of the Red Mount Chapel by Edward Edwards, whose sketchbooks captured many aspects of King's Lynn's history in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 10).<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Mackerell 1738: <https://archive.org/details/historyandantiq00mackgoog>

<sup>18</sup> Blomefield 1808, 476–54: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/topographical-hist-norfolk/vol8>

<sup>19</sup> Richards 1812: <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=sTcGAQAIAAJ>

<sup>20</sup> Taylor 1844: <https://archive.org/details/antiquitiesofkin00tayluoft>

<sup>21</sup> Beloe 1895: <https://doi.org/10.5284/1077516>

<sup>22</sup> Beloe 1899: [https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=sL\\_MO1hel2UC](https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=sL_MO1hel2UC)

<sup>23</sup> Hillen 1907: <https://archive.org/details/historyofborough01hill>

<sup>24</sup> NHER 5478 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5478>); Pitcher 2008; Higgins 2001.

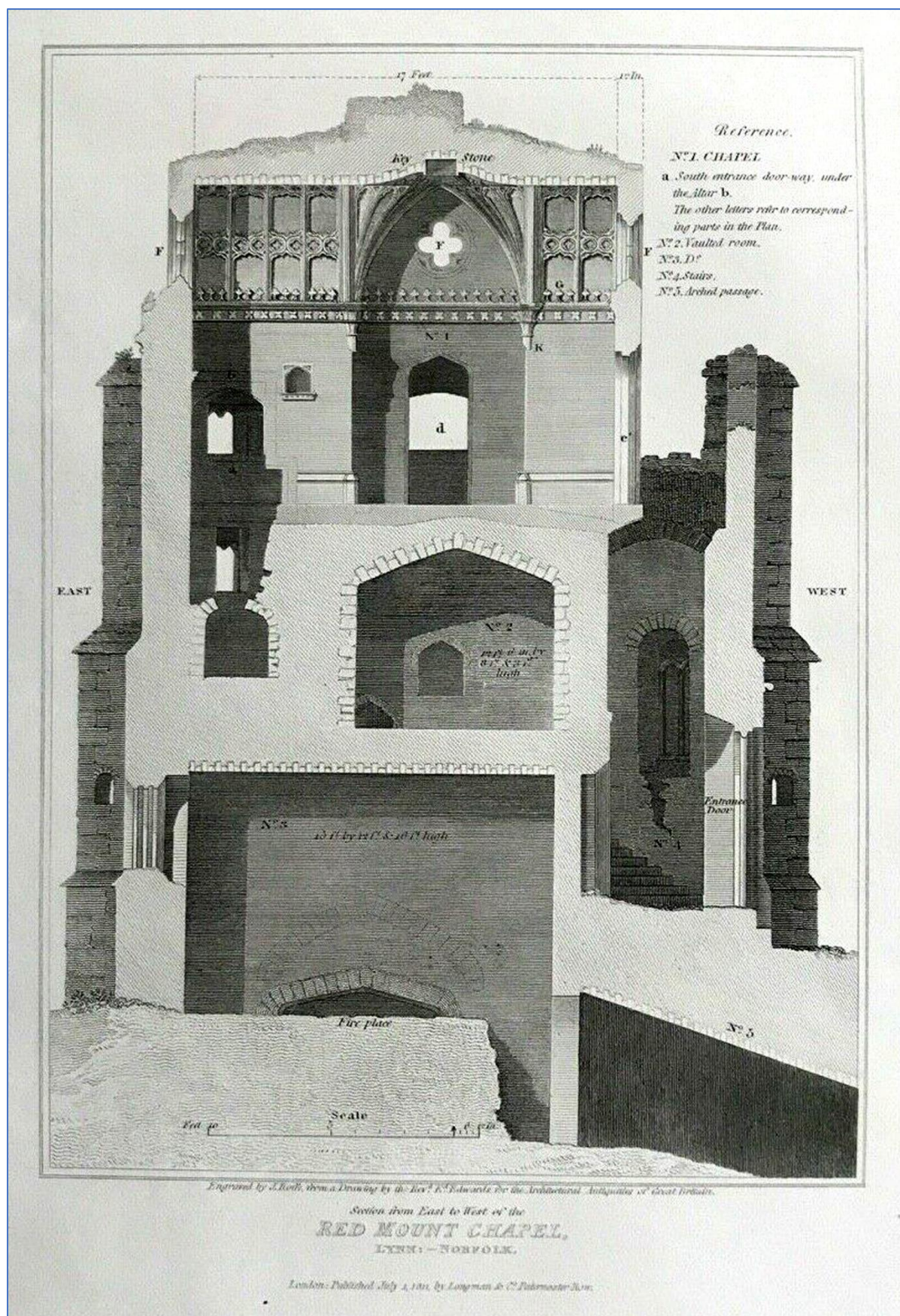


Figure 10. A cross-section of the Red Mount Chapel after a drawing by the Rev. Edward Edwards, published in 1811.



The Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society was founded in 1846, and from the outset many of the volumes of its journal *Norfolk Archaeology* contained articles pertaining to King's Lynn.<sup>25</sup> Within the town, in 1854 a museum was established inside the original King's Lynn Athenaeum, which stood on Baxter's Plain,<sup>26</sup> and in 1904, following the relocation of the Athenaeum, the museum moved to the former Union Baptist Chapel which it still occupies today.<sup>27</sup>

- 3.4 The Norfolk Archaeological Trust was founded in 1923, and King's Lynn was well represented in the early governing council, with its members including Harry Bradfer-Lawrence and Edward Beloe, the latter of whom also amassed a large collection of late-19<sup>th</sup>-century photographs of the town. In 1932, the Norfolk Archaeological Trust inherited the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Greenland Fishery building on Bridge Street from Beloe's executors.<sup>28</sup> In 1912, Beloe had opened the building as a museum housing local antiquities, maps and manuscripts, and a committee was formed to keep it running. The building was badly damaged during the Second World War and the museum collection removed, but the building was repaired and leased out in 1951, before being given to the King's Lynn Preservation Trust in 1997.<sup>29</sup>
- 3.5 Throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the archaeological significance of King's Lynn as a major medieval town was increasingly recognised nationally. The Royal Archaeological Institute held its Summer Meeting in King's Lynn in July 1932, during which the town's important sites and historic buildings were visited, together with many in the surrounding area. A detailed account of proceedings was published in the *Archaeological Journal* later that year.<sup>30</sup>
- 3.6 The study of King's Lynn gained a new impetus during the post-war period, which was primarily driven by the threats posed by the planned redevelopment of the town, which would see the demolition of many ancient buildings. In 1945, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) produced a survey of the buildings of architectural and historic interest in the town for the Corporation of King's Lynn, in which it was noted that the town 'possesses a remarkable collection of buildings representative of all periods from the Middle Ages onwards'.<sup>31</sup> The King's Lynn Civic Society was founded in 1947, amongst whose aims

---

<sup>25</sup> Norfolk Archaeology: <https://doi.org/10.5284/1078322>

<sup>26</sup> NHER 62822 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71291>)

<sup>27</sup> NHER 35372 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF39497>)

<sup>28</sup> NHER 5482 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5482>)

<sup>29</sup> Wade-Martins 2014, 239–40.

<sup>30</sup> RAI 1932: <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/archjournal/contents.cfm?vol=89>.

<sup>31</sup> SPAB 1945, 3.

was the preservation of the town's historic buildings, and this in turn led to the establishment of the King's Lynn Preservation Trust in 1958, when the Civic Society was offered the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Hampton Court on Nelson Street and wanted to see it restored.<sup>32</sup> During the last 60 years, the Preservation Trust has acquired and restored numerous other buildings of architectural and historic merit across the town.<sup>33</sup>

- 3.7 Post-war redevelopment intensified following King's Lynn's designation as a London overspill town in 1961. In response, in April 1962, the Society for Medieval Archaeology held its Spring Conference in King's Lynn, at which significant papers were presented on the town's merchants' houses and warehouses<sup>34</sup> and on medieval trade on the Wash.<sup>35</sup> Both papers were published in the Society's journal the following year. Recognising the urgent need for a detailed archaeological study of King's Lynn to be undertaken before the planned redevelopment occurred and the opportunity lost, the Society for Medieval Archaeology established the King's Lynn Archaeological Survey Advisory Committee, the first meeting of which took place in June 1963.
- 3.8 The stated aims of the King's Lynn Archaeological Survey (KLAS) were to examine the origins of the town and chart its development using a combination of architectural, archaeological and historical evidence, and it was fitting that the fieldwork should in part be paid for by a legacy left by Henry Hillen for the encouragement of local archaeology. The architectural aims of the project were aided by the fact that Vanessa Parker was already engaged in recording historic buildings in the town for the King's Lynn Preservation Trust and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. The archaeological element of the survey ran between 1963 and 1971 and comprised five major archaeological excavations and many more minor pieces of fieldwork led first by Helen Clarke (née Parker), followed by Eric Talbot (who was already working in the town) and then by Alan Carter.<sup>36</sup> The lifespan of the KLAS also witnessed the foundation of the West Norfolk and King's Lynn Archaeological Society, the inaugural meeting of which was held in November 1967,<sup>37</sup> the members of which have made significant contributions to our understanding of the town during the last 50 years.

---

<sup>32</sup> NHER 12009 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF12009>)

<sup>33</sup> King's Lynn Preservation Trust 2018.

<sup>34</sup> Pantin 1963.

<sup>35</sup> Carus-Wilson 1963.

<sup>36</sup> Mottram 1968.

<sup>37</sup> <http://wnklas.greyhawk.org.uk/main.php?p=wnklas50/minutes.htm>

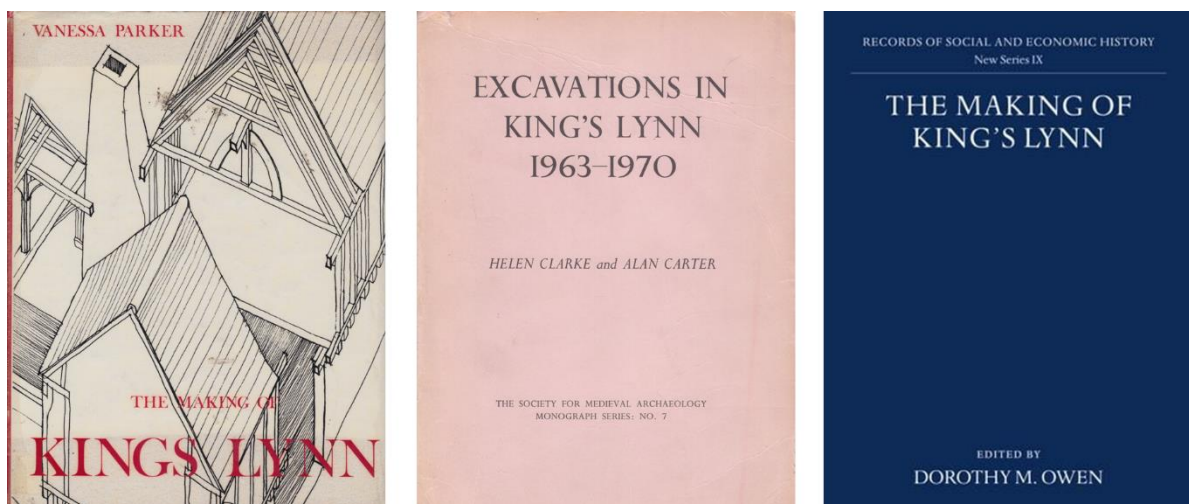


Figure 11. The three volumes on the Making of King's Lynn series presenting the published results of the King's Lynn Archaeological Survey.

- 3.9 Following the end of the fieldwork phase, the KLAS ultimately resulted in the publication of three volumes: *The Making of King's Lynn* by Vanessa Parker (1971), focussing on secular buildings in the town from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries; *Excavations in King's Lynn 1963–1970* by Helen Clarke and Alan Carter (1977), focussing on the archaeological excavations undertaken as part of the survey; and *The Making of King's Lynn: A Documentary Survey* by Dorothy Owen (1984), which presented the results of the extensive documentary survey of the town's history (Figure 11). These were complemented by an important assessment of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Newland Survey, which was published in 1978.<sup>38</sup> The results of the KLAS and the conclusions presented in its publications greatly informed our understanding of the historical, archaeological and architectural development of the town, and these conclusions have been confirmed and elaborated upon by the results of more recent fieldwork.
- 3.10 The rapid redevelopment of the town continued during the later 1970s and 1980s, a period which saw the recording of several important buildings during their renovation or – less fortunately – during their demolition. These included several high-status stone houses dating from the medieval period, which fronted onto the former medieval waterfront, now marked by the line of Queen Street and King Street. In the mid-1970s, the nascent county archaeological unit worked with the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments to record a medieval stone house at 28–32 King Street, which was concealed by later walls.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, in early 1977, a late 12<sup>th</sup>- or early 13<sup>th</sup>-century house at 28–34 Queen Street was demolished, with periodic building recording undertaken as opportunity allowed. Again, the early features were hidden behind later render and their true nature only became apparent

<sup>38</sup> Rutledge and Rutledge 1978.

<sup>39</sup> NHER 1028 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF1028>); Richmond and Taylor 1976.

as the demolition progressed (Figures 12 and 13).<sup>40</sup> At the same time, documentary evidence was uncovered for a similar house at 22 King Street, which had been demolished in 1901, during the course of which a 13<sup>th</sup>-century window was revealed.<sup>41</sup> Although episodes such as this highlighted the vulnerability of the town's historic buildings, with questions being asked in parliament, in many cases this did little to prevent further episodes occurring.

- 3.11 In 1988, Norfolk County Council introduced policies via the County Structure Plan which required archaeological sites to be protected and, where necessary, excavated as part of the development process.<sup>42</sup> Such approaches were later enforced by the implementation of *Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 16: Archaeology and Planning* in 1990, under which the requirement for archaeological evaluation and recording became a fundamental part of the planning process. This was followed in 1994 by *PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment*, which ensured a similar approach to historic buildings, and in 2010 the pair were amalgamated into *Planning Policy Statement 5*. Since 2012, the effective management of the historic environment has been one of the central tenets of the *National Planning Policy Framework*, under which designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings are afforded considerable protection through the planning process.<sup>43</sup>
- 3.12 As a consequence of these pieces of legislation, development projects undertaken within King's Lynn during the last 30 years have required sometimes very extensive programmes of archaeological fieldwork to be conducted before and during the construction process, in order to ensure that the town's important archaeological and architectural heritage is preserved, managed and understood. Numerous small- and medium-scale archaeological watching briefs, evaluations and excavations have been undertaken within the historic core of the town, the details of which are all incorporated into the UAD. Examples of such fieldwork include archaeological investigations undertaken in and around the Red Mount Chapel during 2006 and 2007 as part of the redevelopment of The Walks, which revealed details of the construction and later use of the building,<sup>44</sup> and an archaeological evaluation carried out inside the branch of Marks and Spencer on the High Street during the installation of a new lift shaft in 2008, which revealed evidence for underlying medieval occupation.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> NHER 12052 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF12052>); Richmond *et al.* 1982; Wade-Martins 1977; Wade-Martins 2017, 161–3.

<sup>41</sup> NHER 12676 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF12676>); Wade-Martins 1982.

<sup>42</sup> Wade-Martins 2017, 158–63.

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>44</sup> NHER 44112 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF49112>); Hardy *et al.* 2010.

<sup>45</sup> NHER 51547 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF56961>)





Figure 12. The façade of 30 Queen Street with render removed in January 1977. (Reproduced from Wade-Martins 1977)



Figure 13. The remains of 30 Queen Street on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1977. (Reproduced from Wade-Martins 1977)

- 3.13 By far the most significant programme of archaeological work to have been undertaken during the development-led era is the large-scale excavation of a number of sites within the historic core of the town carried out between 2003 and 2005 as part of the redevelopment of the Vancouver Shopping Centre and the construction of the nearby Clough Lane multi-storey car-park. This fieldwork covered approximately 12% of the historic town centre and, together with the results of small pieces of fieldwork and the KLAS, has greatly informed our understanding of the development of the town itself.<sup>46</sup>
- 3.14 The extent to which King's Lynn has expanded beyond the medieval town walls is reflected in the boundary of the UAD area, which encompasses the rural hinterland of the town and now contains many of the town's outlying industrial estates and retail parks (Figures 2 and 3). In many cases, these have also been subject to archaeological fieldwork prior to or during their construction, from which can be inferred something of the wider landscape context of the town itself and the manner in which it has expanded over time.
- 3.15 More recently, King's Lynn has been included in wider regional or national projects with a thematic focus. Between 2001 and 2006, the area was surveyed as part of English Heritage/Historic England's Norfolk Rapid Coastal Zone Archaeological Survey (RCZAS), as part of which a National Mapping Programme (NMP; now Aerial Investigation and Mapping) project was undertaken focussing on Norfolk's Coastal Zone.<sup>47</sup> The NMP sought to map, interpret and record all archaeological features – cropmarks, earthworks and structures – visible on aerial photographs and the results of the survey are fully integrated into the Norfolk HER and now the UAD, as well as being available via Historic England's Aerial Archaeology Mapping Explorer website.<sup>48</sup> Historical aerial photographs of the town can be viewed via the Britain from Above website<sup>49</sup> and Historic England's Aerial Photo Explorer website.<sup>50</sup> The aerial survey identified numerous features in the King's Lynn area and made a particular contribution to our understanding of the extent of the salt-making industry on which the town was founded, as well as providing a more detailed understanding of the town's Second World War defences. In 2004, the aerial survey was complemented by a walkover survey of the Norfolk coast, which enabled many of the features identified from aerial photographs in the King's Lynn area and elsewhere to be ground-truthed.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> ENF94441 & ENF137944; Brown and Hardy 2011: <https://eaareports.org.uk/publication/report140/>

<sup>47</sup> Albone *et al.* 2007: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/114-2007>

<sup>48</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/aerial-archaeology-mapping-explorer/>

<sup>49</sup> <https://britainfromabove.org.uk/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos/>

<sup>51</sup> Robertson *et al.* 2005: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/100-2005>

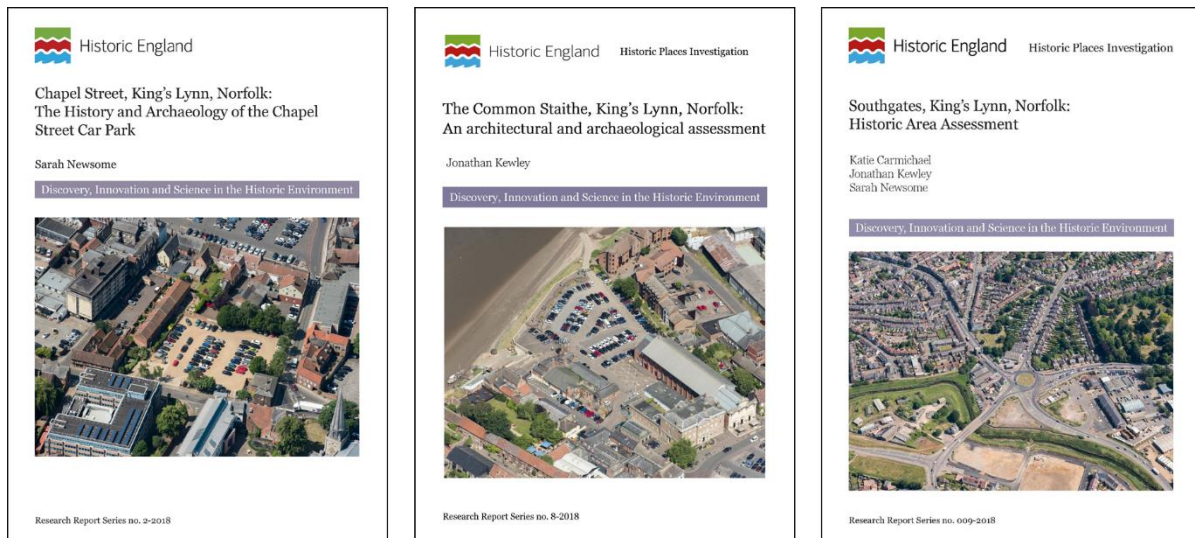


Figure 14. The three Historic England Research Reports produced as part of the King's Lynn HAZ programme.

- 3.16 In 2016, King's Lynn was one of nineteen major ports which was included in the England's North Sea Ports project funded by Historic England. This project focussed on the historical development of each port, its present character and port-related heritage.<sup>52</sup> Each port was the subject of a Port Heritage Summary report, supported by GIS polygons which identified individual areas of port-related character, and the conclusions drawn by this assessment have been incorporated into the UAD and are discussed further in the following section.
- 3.17 Most recently, in addition creating the UAD, the King's Lynn HAZ scheme included the production by Historic England of archaeological, architectural and historical assessments of three areas of the town for which it was judged that such work would inform future regeneration. Specifically, these are the Common Staithe at the northern end of the town,<sup>53</sup> the nearby Chapel Street Car Park,<sup>54</sup> and the area surrounding the historic South Gate (Figure 13).<sup>55</sup> Digital copies of these reports are available from the Historic England website and details of the historic buildings identified during these surveys and the conclusions drawn about each of these areas have been incorporated into the UAD and the following discussion. These reports were complemented by an archaeological borehole survey of the Common Staithe and Chapel Street Car Parks, which was commissioned by Norfolk County Council on behalf of Historic England as part of the HAZ programme and undertaken by Oxford Archaeology.<sup>56</sup> The results of this survey have also been incorporated into the UAD.

<sup>52</sup> Cornwall Archaeological Unit 2016: <https://doi.org/10.5284/1040801>

<sup>53</sup> Kewley 2018: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/8-2018>

<sup>54</sup> Newsome 2018: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/2-2018>

<sup>55</sup> Carmichael *et al.* 2018: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/9-2018>

<sup>56</sup> Stafford and Howsam 2022.

## 4. The Archaeology of King's Lynn

4.0.1 The previous sections have set out the details of the UAD project and the rich history of investigation which has informed our understanding of the historic town of King's Lynn and its immediate hinterland. As was discussed above, there are already many very comprehensive histories of King's Lynn and detailed assessments have been published on many different aspects of the town's historical development, archaeology, architecture and economy. These materials do not need to be repeated here, but rather this section presents a summary overview of the historical development of the King's Lynn UAD area, drawing on the content of the UAD.

### 4.1 Occupation Pre-Dating the Town

- 4.1.1 The archaeological data contained within the UAD indicate that there was very little in the way of human occupation which significantly pre-dates the foundation of the town itself. Given what we know about the geographic development of the Wash and the Fenland, this is not so surprising, as the prevailing environmental conditions did not lend themselves to permanent occupation of the land on which the town stands until the Late Anglo-Saxon period.<sup>57</sup>
- 4.1.2 Prehistoric material from the parish is limited to the discovery, most often as stray finds, of worked flint implements ranging in date from the Palaeolithic period to the Bronze Age, and from the Bronze Age to the Roman period by pottery, metalwork and archaeological features. Examples of Palaeolithic handaxes have been recovered as stray finds from within the North Wootton and north-eastern parts of the UAD area, with findspots predominantly lying on the west-facing slopes as the ground rises away from the floodplains of the Gaywood valley and the Wash basin.<sup>58</sup> Discoveries of Mesolithic flints are similarly limited, although a Late Mesolithic to Early Neolithic flint-working site was discovered during archaeological work conducted ahead of the construction of the Fairstead development, at the eastern extent of the UAD area.<sup>59</sup> Although now some distance inland, adjacent to the A149, this site was formerly a fen-edge location, with flint-working taking place along the banks of a palaeochannel.

---

<sup>57</sup> Green 1961; Hall and Coles 1994; Murphy 2005.

<sup>58</sup> e.g. NHER 13831 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF13831>); NHER 14416 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF14416>); NHER 14429 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF14429>).

<sup>59</sup> NHER 3620 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF40517>)



- 4.1.3 Evidence for the Neolithic period is more widespread across the UAD area, itself an indication of the changing topography of the region over time. Evidence for Later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age flint-working was also discovered at the Fairstead site,<sup>60</sup> while several examples of Neolithic flintwork including axe-heads and arrowheads and have been discovered on the higher ground of the North Wootton, Gaywood, North Runcton and West Winch areas.<sup>61</sup> It is interesting to note that Neolithic flint arrowheads were also recovered during the construction of both the Bentinck and Alexandra Docks at the northern end of the historic town in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, indicating that Neolithic deposits may lie deeply buried beneath the later urban features.<sup>62</sup>
- 4.1.4 Bronze Age occupation is particularly well evidenced in the north-eastern corner of the UAD area, where a Bronze Age barrow containing two inhumations and seven cremations was excavated in Reffley Wood in 1937–8, together with a flint-working assemblage indicating broadly contemporaneous settlement.<sup>63</sup> Subsequent archaeological fieldwork undertaken on the site in 2014 ahead of its development revealed further details of the barrow and its wider landscape context on the fen edge. Other Bronze Age artefacts from within the UAD area include arrowheads, pottery and metal tools, which are again largely confined to the higher ground.<sup>64</sup>
- 4.1.5 Very little evidence for Iron Age occupation has been discovered within the UAD area, although many sites in the wider hinterland of King’s Lynn, including Bawsey and Snettisham have famously produced particularly high-status objects from this period. Within the UAD area, Iron Age peat deposits have been identified in low-lying locations to the north and south, suggesting that the wider area was largely inundated during this period.<sup>65</sup> A Late Iron

---

<sup>60</sup> NHER 3620 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF40517>)

<sup>61</sup> e.g. NHER 3352 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF3352>); NHER 3353 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF3353>); NHER 5501 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5501>); NHER 5502 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5502>); NHER 5503 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5503>); NHER 16244 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF16244>).

<sup>62</sup> NHER 5495 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5495>); NHER 5496 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5496>).

<sup>63</sup> NHER 5489 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5489>).

<sup>64</sup> e.g. NHER 5494 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5494>); NHER 5504 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5504>); NHER 11989 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF11989>); NHER 15300 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF15300>); NHER 15483 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF15483>); NHER19426 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF19426>); NHER 28120 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF28120>).

<sup>65</sup> NHER 58502 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF64556>);

Age post-alignment and undated pits were located in the Nar valley during archaeological excavations in 2009, which may have formed part of a jetty, routeway or boundary feature.<sup>66</sup>

- 4.1.6 Evidence for Roman occupation within the UAD area is much more extensive, but is again constrained to the higher ground of the North Runcton area to the south and North Wootton to the north. Within North Runcton, extensive evidence for a Roman iron-working complex, including several furnaces, has been identified in the form of metal-slag, pottery and the cropmarks of a large rectangular enclosure. More recently, the site has been subject to geophysical survey and trial-trenching, which have confirmed that the site was primarily active during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>67</sup> Further to the south, in the West Winch area, surface finds of Roman metalwork and coins suggest that the Roman occupation of the fen-edge was extensive.<sup>68</sup> At the northern extent of the UAD area, on the higher ground in North Wootton, archaeological fieldwork undertaken ahead of development in 2009–11 revealed further evidence for the Roman iron-working industry.<sup>69</sup>
- 4.1.7 There is very little evidence for Early Anglo-Saxon occupation within the UAD area, records being limited to stray finds of artefacts and pottery, again discovered on the higher ground to the north and south of the area.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, with the exception of a few findspots, the Middle Anglo-Saxon period is also poorly represented within the UAD area, primarily because the majority of the low-lying land was inundated during this period, with the major focus of Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon occupation lying further to the east around the now-ruined church at Bawsey.<sup>71</sup>
- 4.1.8 As the water receded during the Late Anglo-Saxon period, the tidal waters of the Wash coast became the home of a significant industry focussed on salt production. Although salt production was practised throughout the medieval period, the Domesday records for the King's Lynn area indicate that the industry was well established and widespread along the

---

NHER 62668 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF70263>).

<sup>66</sup> NHER 52618 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF57709>).

<sup>67</sup> NHER 3364 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF3364>);

<sup>68</sup> e.g. NHER 3354 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF3354>);

NHER 3374 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF3374>);

NHER 25069 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF25069>);

NHER 28757 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF28757>).

<sup>69</sup> NHER 53908 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF58931>).

<sup>70</sup> e.g. NHER 14673 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF14673>);

NHER 25291 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF25291>);

NHER 25983 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF25983>);

NHER 28120 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF28120>);

NHER 36069 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF40374>).

<sup>71</sup> NHER 3328 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF3328>); Hutcheson 2006; Pestell 2014.

Wash coast by the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. Some 180 active salterns were recorded in the King's Lynn area in 1066.<sup>72</sup> In its earlier forms, salt production involved the boiling of sea water to extract the salt, resulting in large deposits of burnt waste. However, by the medieval period a different process was being used, in which the brine-rich sand and silt were washed through a filter of peat and turf before being boiled. The salt was then separated from the sand, which was then heaped into mounds, some up to 200m long and over 5m high.<sup>73</sup>

- 4.1.9 During the course of the aerial photographic survey undertaken by the National Mapping Programme, evidence in the form of upstanding earthworks was recorded for nearly 300 medieval saltern mounds on Norfolk's Wash coast, many of which are still visible in the Lidar data reproduced in Figures 4 and 5. An extract from the HER showing the extent of these salterns is shown in Figure 15. Two large groups of saltern mounds were identified at North Lynn and South Wootton, which reflect the Late Anglo-Saxon and medieval coastline of the area, and many of these mounds lie within the UAD area. Several examples of salterns have been excavated within the King's Lynn UAD area, confirming their Late Anglo-Saxon and medieval date.<sup>74</sup> In general, the earlier salterns lie furthest inland, with later examples being closer to the sea, their relative positions resulting from the changing coastline of the area brought about by natural processes and also the expansion brought about by the creation of the saltern mounds themselves.<sup>75</sup> The salt industry was clearly a major factor in land-reclamation in the Wash, and the areas of raised ground created by these salterns and many of the early settlement foci, potentially including the churches of North Lynn and West Lynn, as well as the later town of King's Lynn itself, were sited upon them.<sup>76</sup>
- 4.1.10 In addition to evidence for the salt industry, the entries recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 refer several times to the settlement of 'Lena' or 'Lun', which is differentiated into North, South and West Lynn, but none of these entries is indicative of Lynn at this time having been anything other than a minor settlement.<sup>77</sup> The name 'Lena' is derived from the Brittonic *linn*, meaning 'the pool', and reflects the topography of the area during the Anglo-Saxon period, before the silting up of the Wash and the later reclamation of the foreshore.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> Darby 1971, 134–6.

<sup>73</sup> Albone *et al.* 2007, 116.

<sup>74</sup> e.g. NHER 27899 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF42716>); NHER 62661 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF70256>); Clarke and Clarke 2018.

<sup>75</sup> Albone *et al.* 2007, 116.

<sup>76</sup> NHER 5531 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5531>); NHER 5557 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5557>).

<sup>77</sup> Williams and Martin 2002, 1126, 1151, 1162 and 1180–2.

<sup>78</sup> Oosthuizen 2017, 38–47.





Figure 15. Salterns recorded within and around the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:50,000. (HER data © Norfolk County Council; Contains ESRI World Imagery (Clarity) Beta data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/1606/>)

On the basis of archaeological and historical evidence, it seems that that South Lynn comprised land south of the Millfleet and was focussed around the area where All Saints' church still stands.<sup>79</sup> Although the South Lynn area was incorporated within the later medieval defences of the town, it did not formally become a part of the Borough until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly, the remains of the deserted village of North Lynn, whose church of St Edmund was destroyed by the sea in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, were situated at the north-western end of the later town and survived as earthworks into the 1940s. During the Second World War, the site was used as a German prisoner of war camp and the site was subsequently redeveloped as a chemical factory in the 1950s.<sup>80</sup>

## 4.2 The Origins of the Town

- 4.2.1 The historical origin of the town now known as King's Lynn is usually ascribed to 1090, the year in which Herbert de Losinga, then still the Bishop of Thetford, founded the church of St Margaret at Lena, along with a priory and tied market (Figure 16). As has been seen, the archaeological and historical evidence indicates that the King's Lynn area was occupied, albeit sporadically, for a very long period of time before the town was founded, and historical sources demonstrate the strength of the tenurial hold which the bishop had on the area before the formal foundation of the town. The Domesday Book indicates that the Bishop already owned the estate at Gaywood, immediately to the east of King's Lynn and later the site of a medieval Bishop's palace, and already controlled several of the salterns within the Lynn area.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, some recent commentators have suggested that the foundation of the town was merely a formalisation of an already existing market with nascent port,<sup>82</sup> although there is presently little evidence to support this position with certainty. From this period, the settlement was known as *Lynn Episcopi* – Bishop's Lynn – the name only changing to *Lynn Regis* – King's Lynn – following the transfer of the town from the control of the Bishops of Norwich to King Henry VIII in 1537.
- 4.2.2 De Losinga's decision to found the town was very strategic and it has been suggested that he was also making a symbolic statement by demarcating the eastern and western extents of his new diocese. By the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Wash was one of the most importance riverine

<sup>79</sup> NHER 5553 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5553>).

<sup>80</sup> NHER 5531 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5531>); NHER27889 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF42654>); NHER 38459 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF43223>).

<sup>81</sup> NHER 5555 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5555>).

<sup>82</sup> Hutcheson 2006; Brown and Darby 2011, 1–3.





Figure 16. Aerial view of St Margaret's church from the south-east. The associated priory precinct lay to the south of the church and the Saturday Market to the north. (Photo: Mike Page, taken 10th March 2015).

entrances into lowland England, and the establishment of the monastery and its associated market was a deliberate policy on de Losinga's part to control the movement of wealth at the mouth of the Wash. In this regard, it was similar to the strategy which he adopted at Great Yarmouth, where he also founded a priory, and in Norwich, to where de Losinga relocated the episcopal see. The foundation of Lynn was also more directly related to the demise of Thetford, effectively cutting the town off from the sea, and contributing towards its economic decline.<sup>83</sup>

- 4.2.3 St Margaret's church still dominates the southern part of the town. Its earliest surviving fabric dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century and the building was expanded and rebuilt numerous times during the following centuries.<sup>84</sup> De Losinga also founded a Benedictine priory attached to St Margaret's, dedicating the house in honour of St Mary Magdalen, St Margaret and All Virgin Saints. He endowed it with churches, lands, rents, and men, and granted the priory a market on Saturdays, and a fair at the feast of St Margaret. However, he made the priory of Lynn and all its possessions subordinate to the great diocesan priory of the Holy Trinity attached to Norwich Cathedral. Although the priory was dissolved in the 1530s, we

<sup>83</sup> Atkin 1985, 38–9.

<sup>84</sup> NHER 1026 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF1026>).

can be reasonably certain in identifying the historical extent of the priory precinct as covering the land contained by Church Street, Priory Lane, St Margaret's Place and the Saturday Market Place.<sup>85</sup> At its foundation, the priory had parochial responsibility for the land between the Purfleet and the Millfleet, which gives a strong indication of the extent of the core of the new town, and also an area at South Lynn, which is likely to have been centred around All Saints' church. In return, the tenants owed financial, judicial and perhaps military obligations to the priory.<sup>86</sup>

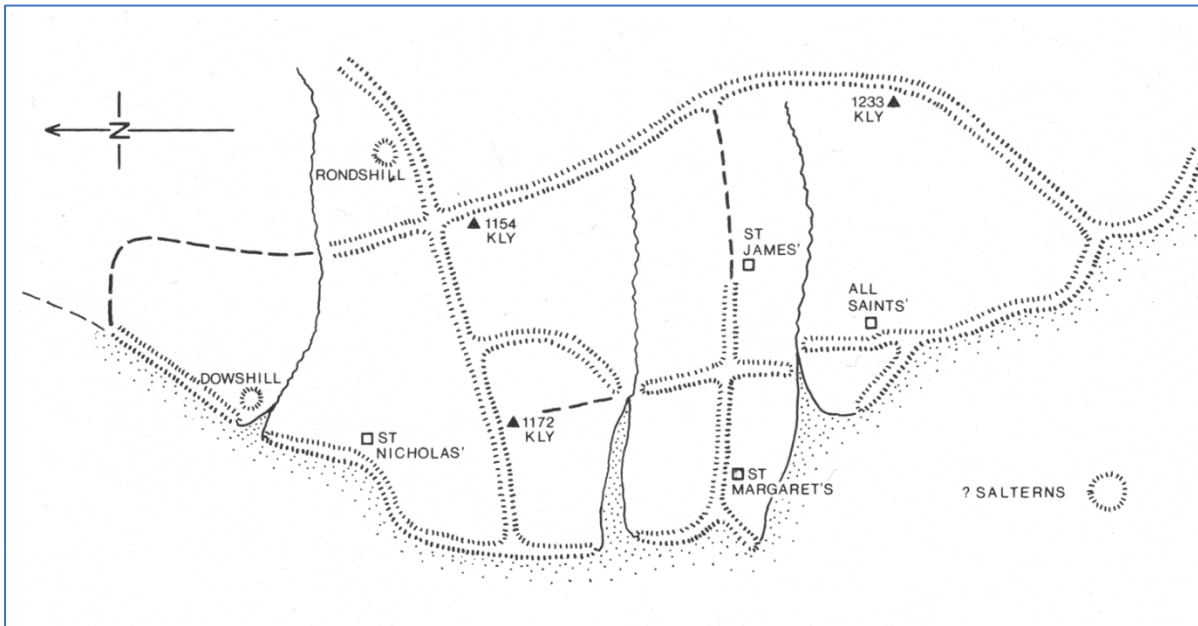


Figure 17. Sketch-map reconstruction of the natural banks in King's Lynn on which the town was founded produced by the King's Lynn Archaeological Survey. (Reproduced from Clarke and Carter 1977, Figure 186)

4.2.4 Regarding the topography of the early town, one of the main conclusions drawn by the KLAS was that the original town had been founded upon a series of linear banks resulting from a combination of natural and salt-extraction-related processes, and that the presence and shape of these banks to some extent dictated the later layout of the town (Figure 17).<sup>87</sup> These banks are difficult to detect in the modern urban landscape, even with the use of Lidar data, but were apparently clearer in the 1960s and were revealed during several excavations undertaken during the course of the KLAS. This interpretation for the origin of the town is broadly accepted, with the historic core of the town effectively being situated on an island of higher land within the riverine marshes.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>85</sup> NHER 1026 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF1026>).

<sup>86</sup> Page 1906, 328–9: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/norf/vol2/pp328-329>

<sup>87</sup> Clarke and Carter 1977, 411–13.

<sup>88</sup> e.g. Hutcheson 2006; Hankinson 2005; Brown and Hardy 2011, 2–3.





Figure 18. Aerial view of St James's chapel from the south-west. (Photo: Mike Page, taken 10 October 2012)

4.2.5 Following the establishment of St Margaret's, a chapel dedicated to St James was founded to some distance to the east of the church, at a date before 1146 (Figure 18).<sup>89</sup> The nave of this chapel was demolished in 1548 leaving the crossing and one bay of the chancel, which became a workhouse in 1581. The structure was rebuilt in 1682, but partially collapsed in 1854 and was used for industry until it was demolished in 1910.<sup>90</sup> The line between St Margaret's church and St James's chapel formed a major west–east axis of the original town, along which the built-up area of the town developed, together with the main south–north axis, which ran through South Lynn and crossed Bishop's Lynn between the Millfleet and the Purfleet.

4.2.6 Somewhat surprisingly, there has been very little archaeological investigation undertaken within the area of the original core of Bishop's Lynn, being the land situated between the Millfleet and the Purfleet. This is primarily a reflection of the extent to which the area is dominated by St Margaret's church and the Saturday Market place, the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Guildhall to their north<sup>91</sup> and the site of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Franciscan Friary to their east,<sup>92</sup> as

<sup>89</sup> NHER 5484 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5484>).

<sup>90</sup> NHER 5484 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5484>).

<sup>91</sup> NHER 5480 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5480>).

<sup>92</sup> NHER 5477 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5477>).



well as the relatively early redevelopment of the area which occurred during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the northern edge of the town, fronting onto the Purfleet, the KLAS undertook a series of excavations between Baker Lane and the riverside which revealed multiple phases of settlement evidence dating from the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century onwards, which included a late-14<sup>th</sup>-century stone warehouse and later hall complex. The site was sparsely occupied during the post-medieval period, and became the site of a brewery in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>93</sup>

- 4.2.7 Of the land lying between St Margaret's and St James's chapel, our knowledge is largely derived from the limited archaeological investigation of the land immediately to the east of St Margaret's church, now occupied by the Church Street Car Park, undertaken by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit in 1997 and 1998. This work revealed a 12<sup>th</sup>- or 13<sup>th</sup>-century timber structure and property boundaries at the southern edge of the site, which were maintained until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, indicting the early occupation and division of this area.<sup>94</sup> At the northern edge of the site, excavations revealed a complex series of occupation layers also dating back to the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, truncated by a 19<sup>th</sup>-century brick cellar.<sup>95</sup>

### 4.3 The Newlands

- 4.3.1 Within 60 years of the foundation of St Margaret's church, under the auspices of William de Turbe, the Bishop of Norwich, the town expanded into the area north of the Purfleet. The formal foundation of this extended area, referred to as the 'Newland', is dated to the period 1146–50 by a grant of land described by Turbe as 'our new land which we have recently provided for settlement'.<sup>96</sup> Towards the northern edge of the Newland, Turbe founded St Nicholas's Chapel in 1146 as a chapel of ease for St Margaret's church. The original building was replaced in about 1200, with a tower added c.1225, and the entire building with the exception of this tower was rebuilt on a grander scale in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Further additions were made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the chapel has recently been restored.<sup>97</sup>
- 4.3.2 However, it is clear from historical and archaeological sources that the occupation of the Newlands was not entirely new. It would seem that bridges across the Purfleet already existed by this date, and a hospital of St John the Baptist had also already been founded within the area of the Newland around 1135. The complex fronted onto Dampgate, the main

---

<sup>93</sup> NHER 1219 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF1219>); Clarke and Carter 1977, 43–99.

<sup>94</sup> NHER 33519 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF33519>).

<sup>95</sup> NHER 33517 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF33517>).

<sup>96</sup> Rutledge and Rutledge 1978.

<sup>97</sup> NHER 5549 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5549>); NHLE 1210545.

road to Gaywood, and comprised a church, hospital, hall, chambers, houses and a court. The hospital was dissolved in 1545 and the site was later redeveloped.<sup>98</sup> It has been suggested that a precursor of what was to become the Tuesday Market on the north-western shore of the town may also pre-date the formal foundation of the Newland, although the evidence for this assertion is less certain.<sup>99</sup> We can be more certain about the fact that in its first incarnation the Tuesday Market was only developed on its southern and eastern sides, with its northern and western extents being bordered by the banks of the river.

- 4.3.3 As a result of a higher incidence of archaeological fieldwork, we have a much greater understanding of the early character of the Newland area. Many of the excavations undertaken by the KLAS were located within the Newland, including excavations south of Surrey Street, to the south-east of the Tuesday Market, which revealed that the site was first settled in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and that the property boundaries established at that date remained largely unchanged until the 1960s.<sup>100</sup> An extensive campaign of archaeological work was undertaken within the historic core of the town between 2003 and 2005 as part of the redevelopment of the Vancouver Shopping Centre and the construction of the nearby Clough Lane multi-storey car-park. This fieldwork covered approximately 12% of the historic town centre, and included a substantial area immediately to the north of the Purfleet.<sup>101</sup> These excavations found very little evidence for occupation of the Newland during the 11<sup>th</sup> or early 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, suggesting that during this period the area was open, undeveloped and contained natural channels, and indicating that the historical account of the occupation of the Newland is broadly correct. The same excavations revealed no evidence for any large-scale or systematic reclamation of the area during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, rather that there was a gradual accretion of material through dumping natural processes, with the focus of occupation being to the west, along the river frontages, rather than further inland.<sup>102</sup>
- 4.3.4 These excavations are complemented by the results of an archaeological borehole survey of the Chapel Street Car Park, which is situated to the east of the Tuesday Market and adjacent to the Borough Council offices, undertaken as part of the King's Lynn HAZ programme.<sup>103</sup> The results of this survey confirmed the historical accounts of the development of the Newland, with organic waterlogged medieval occupation deposits identified at c.1–2m below ground

---

<sup>98</sup> NHER 5487 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5487>).

<sup>99</sup> Hutcheson 2006; Hankinson 2005; Brown and Hardy 2011, 3.

<sup>100</sup> NHER 1163 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF1163>); Clarke and Carter 1977, 5–30.

<sup>101</sup> Brown and Hardy 2011: <https://eaareports.org.uk/publication/report140/>

<sup>102</sup> Brown and Hardy 2011, 101–02.

<sup>103</sup> NHER ENF145566; Stafford and Howsam 2022.

level, beneath thick deposits of make-up and demolition rubble. Radiocarbon dating combined with artefactual evidence suggests occupation occurred from the 11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries on marshy ground marginal to the main core of settlement. These organic occupation deposits overlie a thick sequence of tidal/estuarine deposits to at least 8m deep.

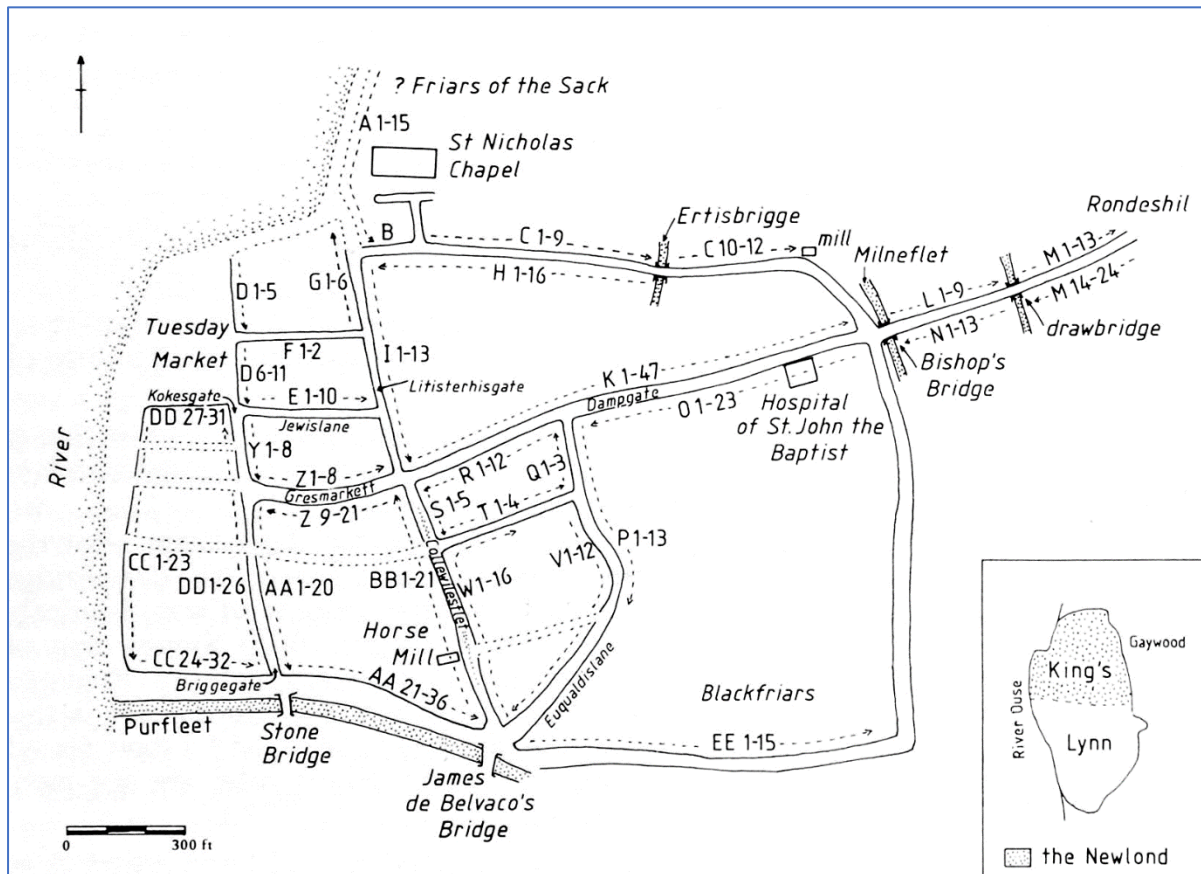


Figure 19. Sketch plan of the Newlond in 1279, showing streets mentioned in the 'Newlond Survey'. (Reproduced from Rutledge and Rutledge 1978, Figure 1)

4.3.5 In addition to the archaeological evidence, a very comprehensive picture of the late 13<sup>th</sup>-century layout of this part of the town can be reconstructed from details contained within the 'Newlond Survey', a rental dating from c.1279 compiled for the Bishop of Norwich. This survey describes the owners and occupiers of the buildings along each of the street frontages in the northern part of the town, although little information is given about the physical nature of the buildings themselves, and the survey gives a vivid insight into the patterns of land-holding and the zoning of different trades within the core of the historic town (Figure 19).<sup>104</sup> Although much has been made of this survey in previous studies, it is felt that considerably more could be extracted from it using historical mapping and modern computing, but unfortunately such work lies beyond the scope of this report.

<sup>104</sup> Parker 1971, 24–9; Rutledge and Rutledge 1978.



Figure 20. Aerial view of the waterfront of the historic core of King's Lynn, between the Purfleet (left) and the Millfleet (right), looking east. (Photo: Mike Page, taken 2 July 2005)

## 4.4 The Medieval Waterfront

4.4.1 To the west of the historic core of the town lies the river, which was the principal reason for King's Lynn's foundation, and Lynn's situation at the head of a network of rivers which penetrated deep into the heart of mainland England was the key to its economic success as a port and transshipment centre (Figure 20). With the exception of the salt industry, which historical sources indicate was already in decline by the time the town was founded, the economy of King's Lynn has been driven by trade rather than production. The presence of foreign merchants is recorded by the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and the town rapidly established a trading network with the Hanseatic League, which spanned the North Sea basin and dominated commercial activity in northern Europe from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>105</sup>

4.4.2 For a while, King's Lynn was one of the most prosperous towns in the country, reaching its peak in the 14<sup>th</sup> century before declining steadily. In an assessment of the comparative wealth of English towns during the medieval period, Hoskins demonstrated that King's Lynn was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in 1334, raising to 7<sup>th</sup> in 1377 and 8<sup>th</sup> in 1523–7, before falling to 22<sup>nd</sup> in 1662 and 41<sup>st</sup> by 1801.<sup>106</sup> During the 13<sup>th</sup>-century heyday of the port, the commodities passing

<sup>105</sup> Jansen 2008; Childs 2013; Ayers 2013; Ayers 2016.

<sup>106</sup> Hoskins 1984; Brown and Hardy 2011, Table 1.1.



inward through the town included furs, hawks, iron, brass, millstones, worked marble, timber, wax, wine, fish, spices, alum, potash, woad. Going out was an equally wide array of cargoes, including wool, corn, ale, lead and cloth.<sup>107</sup>

- 4.4.3 The prosperity of the port was relatively unaffected by the impacts of the Black Death in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and during the late 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries the port continued to export hides, wheat, beans, cloth, wool, barley, corn and malt. Imports from the same period included Rhenish wine, rye from Prussia, herring from Norway, salt from Seeland, wainscots, deal boards, bowstaves, slabs, spars, planks, pitch, tar, wax, ashes, beer, skins, linen, cloth, yarn, thread, fish, cork, garlic, onions, beaver hats, hair and haberdashery.<sup>108</sup>
- 4.4.4 The 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries saw a decline in the international importance of King's Lynn as a trading port, as London came to dominate sea-borne trade. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the town received an economic boost as part of the coastal trade in coal and grain, with the town operating as the main port on the Wash. More exotic imports even in this later period included cordage, cloth, hops, paper, Spanish and French wines, salt, timber, naval stores, sugar, prunes, raisins, peppers, cloves and West Indian ginger.<sup>109</sup>
- 4.4.5 As might be expected, this economic focus on riverine and sea-borne trade had the greatest impact upon the western side of the town, where evidence for a continuous sequence of reclamation and redevelopment spanning the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the present day has been recovered. Indeed, all of the block of land which now lies between the line of Queen Street (south of the Purfleet) and King Street (north of the Purfleet) and the present-day riverside represents the later reclamation and development of the land. We are able to reconstruct the western extent of the original core of the town with a reasonable degree of certainty, and this was another of the significant results of the KLAS (Figure 21).<sup>110</sup> Archaeological and architectural investigations of medieval buildings fronting onto the eastern sides of Queen Street and King Street – such as those at 28–34 Queen Street,<sup>111</sup> 22 King Street<sup>112</sup> and 28–32 King Street<sup>113</sup> – have indicated that this pair of north–south aligned roads marked the original line of the medieval waterfront. To the north, historical sources indicate that the

---

<sup>107</sup> Owen 1984, 42–3; Brown and Hardy 2011, 4.

<sup>108</sup> Clarke 1986, 190; Brown and Hardy 2011, 4.

<sup>109</sup> Parker 1971, 13; Brown and Hardy 2011, 4.

<sup>110</sup> Clarke and Carter 1977, 413–24; Bates 1998.

<sup>111</sup> NHER 12052 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF12052>); Richmond *et al.* 1982; Wade-Martins 2017, 161–3.

<sup>112</sup> NHER 12676 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF12676>); Wade-Martins 1982.

<sup>113</sup> NHER 1028 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF1028>); Richmond and Taylor 1976.

Tuesday Market was open to the river on its western and northern sides, with wharves constructed against it, while to the south of the town a great bank west of St Margaret's church marked the eastern edge of the river and the church was close to the river.<sup>114</sup>

- 4.4.6 During the medieval period, the edge of the town crept westwards as the river was slowly reclaimed by the dumping of waste material off the quaysides.<sup>115</sup> This is clearly illustrated by excavated evidence obtained from the courtyard of Thoresby College, where excavations undertaken by the KLAS in 1964 revealed a medieval timber wharf dating from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. This lay some 55m east of the present bank of the Ouse, indicating the extent to which the land of the western fringe of the town has been reclaimed by that date. At the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a layer of silt was spread over the site in order to build up the surface, on top of which a brick-building was constructed.<sup>116</sup> Thoresby College post-dates these buildings, and was constructed as a college for chantry priests between 1508 and 1511, allowing the westwards expansion of the town to be dated with some certainty.<sup>117</sup>
- 4.4.7 By taking a similar analytical approach to the medieval and post-medieval buildings which stand on the strip of reclaimed land west of Queen Street and King Street, the KLAS was able to chart the changing riverside more closely. Their findings indicate that between c.1350 to 1500 the western side of these streets was developed for the first time, with numerous merchants' houses constructed facing onto the street and their associated warehouses and quays constructed behind them on the riverside. Surviving 15<sup>th</sup>-century buildings include the Guildhall of St George on King Street,<sup>118</sup> 7–9 King Street<sup>119</sup> and 3 King Street.<sup>120</sup> On Queen Street, buildings such as Clifton House give an indication of the position of the river in the 14<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>121</sup> as do the excavated remains at Thoresby College referred to above.<sup>122</sup> At the corner of St Margaret's Place and St Margaret's Lane, in 1475 the Hanseatic League constructed what is now the only surviving example of a Hanseatic warehouse, or 'steelyard' in England, Hanse House.<sup>123</sup> Many of these buildings exhibit further westward extensions to their rears, which are indicative of the extent of the post-medieval riverside (Figure 22).

---

<sup>114</sup> Clarke and Carter 1977, 416–18.

<sup>115</sup> Clarke and Carter 1977, 413–23.

<sup>116</sup> NHER 1228 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF1228>). Clarke and Carter 1977, 100–11, 418–20.

<sup>117</sup> NHER 63575 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71996>).

<sup>118</sup> NHER 5483 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF4583>).

<sup>119</sup> NHER 55898 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF62284>).

<sup>120</sup> NHER 55894 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF62281>).

<sup>121</sup> NHER 5535 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5535>).

<sup>122</sup> Clarke and Carter 1977, 100–11, 420–1.

<sup>123</sup> Jansen 2008; NHER 1230 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF1230>).



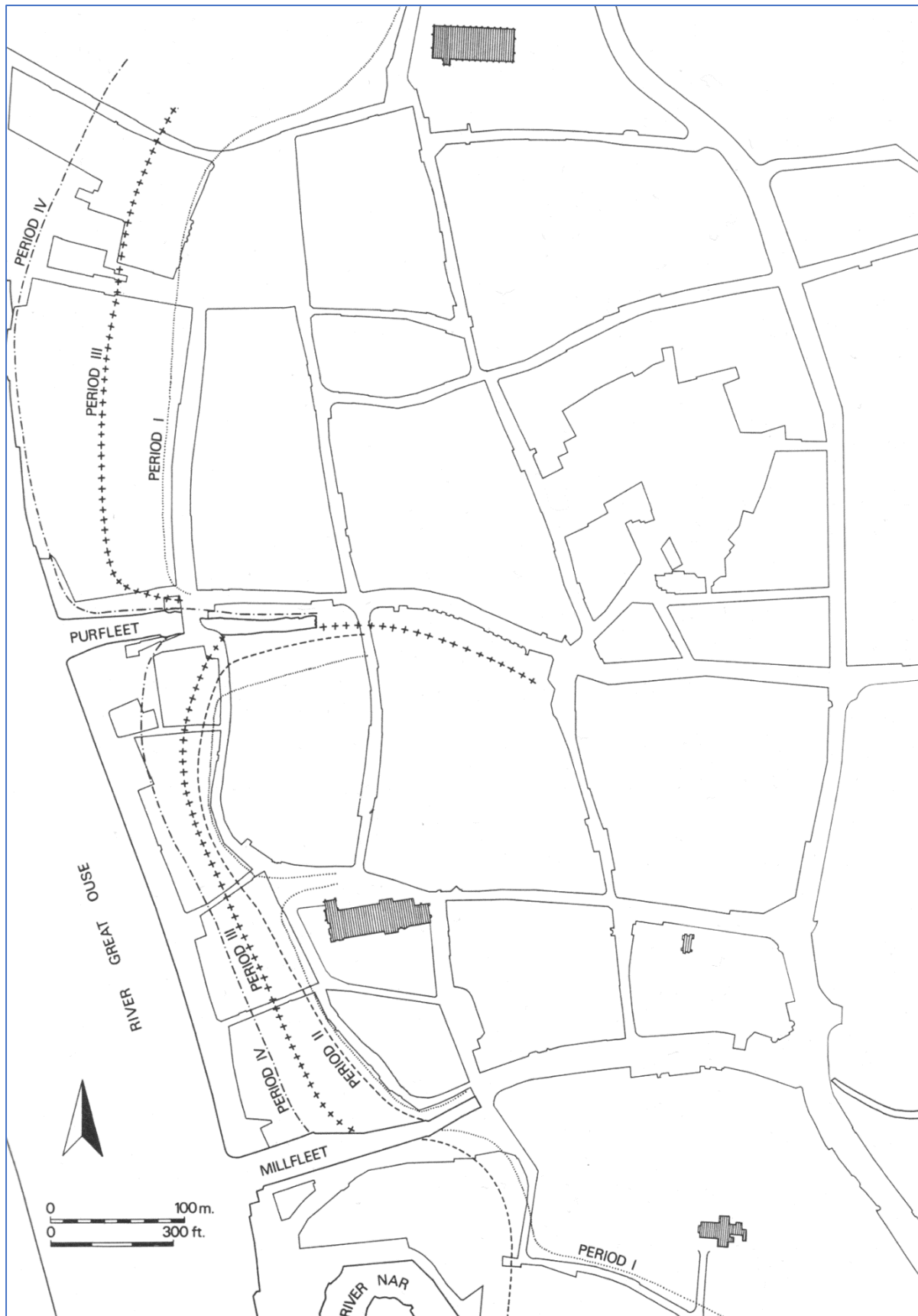


Figure 21. Map of King's Lynn produced by the King's Lynn Archaeological Survey showing the changing medieval riverline. Phase I = 1050–1150; Phase II = 1150–1350; Phase III = 1350–1550; Phase IV = 1550–1750. (Reproduced from Clarke and Carter 1977, Figure 191)





Figure 22. Aerial view of the waterfront of the historic core of King's Lynn north of the Purfleet (right), looking east, showing the linear rearward expansion of the plots fronting onto King Street. (Photo: Mike Page, taken 2 July 2005)



Figure 23. Aerial view of the Greyfriars tower within the Tower Gardens, looking west. (Photo: Mike Page, taken 10 March 2015)



## 4.5 Friars and Pilgrims

- 4.5.1 While the waterfront area became the commercial focus of the town, backed by the Tuesday and Saturday Markets, during the course of the 13<sup>th</sup> century the more marginal and low-lying land at the eastern edge of the town was colonised by a series of friaries representing all of the major mendicant orders. These sites dominated the religious landscape of the town until they were dissolved in the 1530s, and their sites continued to play a significant role in the topography of the town well into the post-medieval period.
- 4.5.2 Between 1230 and 1264, a Franciscan Friary (Greyfriars) was founded immediately to the north of the Millfleet and east of St Margaret's church.<sup>124</sup> The friary was dissolved in 1538 and the surviving Greyfriars tower was conveyed to the King's Lynn Corporation for use as a seamark.<sup>125</sup> Much of the site was cleared in 1806 to widen the adjacent street, following the filling in of the Millfleet, and the site is now occupied by the King's Lynn library<sup>126</sup> and the former St Margaret's School.<sup>127</sup> The ruins of the Greyfriars tower stand within the Tower Gardens, which were created in 1911 to mark the coronation of George V and also contains the town's war memorial (Figure 23).<sup>128</sup>
- 4.5.3 In 1256, a Dominican Friary (Blackfriars) was founded on the site now occupied by the bus station, King's Lynn Museum and developed area between Old Market Street and Blackfriars Street.<sup>129</sup> The friary was large enough to house 40 friars by the 1270s, and was eventually dissolved in 1538, and the buildings, including the cloisters and gatehouse, remained as ruins until they were demolished in 1845. A burial ground associated with the friary was discovered in 1841, when the adjacent Baptist chapel was constructed. Archaeological traces of the friary complex were discovered during the construction of the Athenaeum in the late 1850s, the Post Office garage in 1954, and the telephone exchange in 1980. Parts of the friary complex were also excavated during the redevelopment of the Vancouver Centre in 2005 and 2008.<sup>130</sup>
- 4.5.4 By the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, an Augustinian Friary was founded to the east of the Tuesday Market place, on the site now occupied by the Borough Council offices at King's Court.<sup>131</sup> The

---

<sup>124</sup> Page 1906, 426–8: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/norf/vol2/pp426-428#h3-0003>

<sup>125</sup> NHER 5477 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5477>).

<sup>126</sup> NHER 52803 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF57898>).

<sup>127</sup> NHER 64029 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72094>).

<sup>128</sup> NHER 64026 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72088>).

<sup>129</sup> Page 1906, 426–8: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/norf/vol2/pp426-428#h2-0001>

<sup>130</sup> NHER 1176 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF1176>).

<sup>131</sup> Page 1906, 426–8: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/norf/vol2/pp426-428#h3-0005>

surviving northern gateway to the priory precinct still stands to the north of the offices, but no archaeological work was undertaken before the construction of the offices in the 1970s. It is assumed that the friary may have comprised a medieval large house, and was used to accommodate royal visitations to the town in the 1446 and 1498. Following its Dissolution in the 1538, the site of the friary was apparently left largely empty until the land was developed again in the 19th century.<sup>132</sup> The Friars of the Sack also had a house in King's Lynn during the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the exact site of which is unknown, although the Newland survey indicates that it stood to the north of St Nicholas's chapel.<sup>133</sup> In 1293, the order was suppressed and its members joined with the Augustinians.<sup>134</sup>

- 4.5.5 Within South Lynn, a Carmelite Friary (Whitefriars) was founded about 1260, encompassing a relatively large site to the south-west of All Saints' church, bounded to the south and east by river channels.<sup>135</sup> The site was dissolved in 1538 and sold to the King's Lynn Corporation in 1544 and the church tower stood until 1631. The site is now occupied by the buildings of Whitefriars Road, Whitefriars Terrace and Carmelite Terrace, as well as by the Whitefriars Primary School. Only the former gateway to the precinct survives above ground, and excavations in 1900 apparently revealed a bridge leading to the gate. Very little excavation has been undertaken within the boundary of the precinct.<sup>136</sup>
- 4.5.6 As well as being a busy trading port, King's Lynn also became an important landing point for pilgrims making their way to the shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham. In 1485, this resulted in the construction of the Red Mount Chapel at the eastern edge town, which functioned as a wayside chapel, although it also became a pilgrimage destination in its own right (Figures 10 and 24).<sup>137</sup> The core of the building comprises an octagonal brick tower, which was embellished with a stone cruciform chapel on its roof in 1505. The chapel ceased to be used in 1537, after which time it functioned as an observatory, a gunpowder store and a stable, before increasing antiquarian interest led to its excavation and restoration in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>132</sup> NHER 1025 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF1025>).

<sup>133</sup> NHER 14460 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF14460>).

<sup>134</sup> Page 1906, 426–8: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/norf/vol2/pp426-428#h3-0006>

<sup>135</sup> Page 1906, 426–8: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/norf/vol2/pp426-428#h3-0004>

<sup>136</sup> NHER 5481 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5481>).

<sup>137</sup> NHER 5478 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5478>); Pitcher 2008; Hardy *et al.* 2010.



Figure 24. Aerial view of the Red Mount Chapel, looking north-east. (Photo: Mike Page, taken on 10 October 2012)

## 4.6 The Medieval Defences

4.6.1 Historical sources indicate that King's Lynn was first fortified in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when the town was surrounded by an earthwork and a ditch.<sup>138</sup> The medieval defences of town encircled the entire settlement, including the area of South Lynn, the historic core of Bishop's Lynn between the Millfleet and the Purfleet, and the Newland. Many later maps capture the later incarnations of the defences, following their augmentation during the Civil War. The former course of the defences is relatively easily to trace due to the fact that many of the streets which followed the line of the defences have survived, together with many stretches of walling, earthworks and gatehouses, and by the survival of several stretches of wet ditch on their eastward side (Figure 25). It has often been noted that the area enclosed by the defences is larger than the core of the town, which was historically thought to reflect a later contraction of the town.<sup>139</sup> However, this has since been demonstrated to have arisen because the defences utilised pre-existing natural banks and channels to the east of the town, resulting in the enclosure of much marginal and low-lying land, which was utilised by many of the friaries which were founded in the town during the later 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>138</sup> NHER 5486 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5486>).

<sup>139</sup> e.g. Smith 1970.

<sup>140</sup> Clarke and Carter 1977, 432–8; Kent 1988, 223–37.

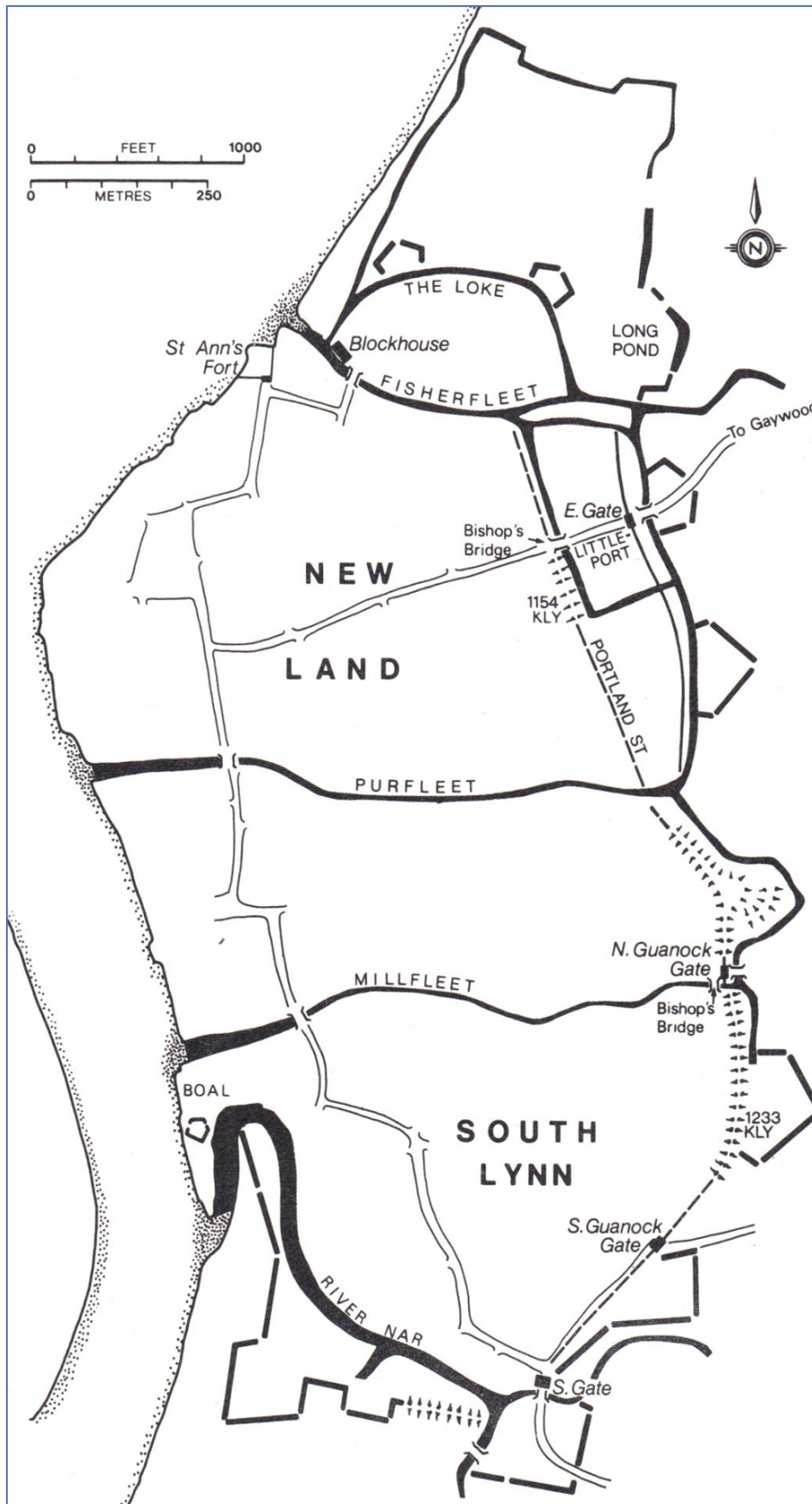


Figure 25. Reconstruction plan of King's Lynn produced by the King's Lynn Archaeological Survey showing the medieval and post-medieval defences. Watercourses are shown solid black. (Reproduced from Clarke and Carter 1977, Figure 195)



- 4.6.2 In terms of natural defences, the western side of the town was effectively defended by the river itself, while the southern edge of the town was defined by the course of the River Nar and its canalised stretch which came to be known as the Friars' Fleet following the foundation of the Carmelite priory immediately against it. On the northern bank of this river the town defences apparently comprised an earthen bank which followed the course of the river until it reached the position of the south gate. At the northern end of the town, a similar defensive function was performed by the Fisher Fleet, and artificial channels were cut linking these two rivers to the Purfleet and the Millfeet to create a water-filled ditch which surrounded most of the town.
- 4.6.3 Moving clockwise around the defences, running southwards from the Fisher Fleet the town defences comprised a 400-yard (365m) length of stone walling with a single tower, known as the North or Kettle Mills Tower,<sup>141</sup> but the rest of the defences comprised earthworks. There were apparently four early timber gates into the town, to the north, east, south and west. The northern gate, known as the North Bretask, is likely to have been situated at the north-western corner of the town, near to where St Anne's fort was constructed in the later 16th century.<sup>142</sup> The East and South Bretasks stood close to, if not on, the sites of the later East and South Gates respectively, while the site of the West Bretask is less certain, although it has been suggested that it may have stood at the confluence of the Purfleet with the Ouse.<sup>143</sup>
- 4.6.4 The former North Tower (perhaps also known as the Black Tower) dated from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but was only demolished in the 1970s, having subsequently been used to provide fresh water for the town since at least the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In 1682, a windpump was erected to aid in raising the water and in 1829 a new water-tower was built.<sup>144</sup> To the south of the site, a surviving stretch of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century stone wall between the Fisher Fleet and the site of the former East Gate, with some of the best preserved sections being those adjacent to Kettlewell Lane.<sup>145</sup> The East Gate stood at the north-eastern corner of the town on the route to Gaywood and dates from the 13th century. By the time of the Newland survey, the gate had an external drawbridge and several of the buildings which had developed as a small suburb outside the gate had been pulled down to clear the approach to it. The gate was

---

<sup>141</sup> NHER 64057 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72011>).

<sup>142</sup> NHER 64052 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72012>).

<sup>143</sup> Smith 1970, 61–2.

<sup>144</sup> NHER 64057 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72011>).

<sup>145</sup> NHER 64066 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72126>).

eventually demolished in 1800 as it was ruinous and the archway was proving awkwardly low.<sup>146</sup>

- 4.6.5 A further section of the town wall survives to the east of Wyatt Street, south of the former East Gate, this stretch containing cobbles which are said to have been brought to the town as ballast in ships from Estonia.<sup>147</sup> To the south of this wall is the site of the former White Tower, which projected from the face of the wall and which was only demolished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>148</sup> Archaeological excavations conducted ahead of the construction of the supermarket north of the railway station revealed evidence for the former existence of the town ditch and associated defences to the south of the White Tower.<sup>149</sup> Further traces were found during excavations to the south of the railway station in 2015, located at the southern end of the walled section of defences.<sup>150</sup>
- 4.6.6 South of the Purfleet, the defences comprised earthworks, on some of which the Red Mount Chapel was later constructed.<sup>151</sup> South of the Chapel, immediately north of the Millfleet, stand the remains of the North Guanock Gate, which was constructed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, reinforced during the Civil War and reworked as a feature of The Walks in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>152</sup> The North Guanock Gate was paired with the South Guanock Gate, and the line of the former defences is marked by Guanock Terrace. This gate was also constructed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but was apparently disused by the start of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and was eventually demolished in 1803 and used as hardcore in the construction of London Road.<sup>153</sup>
- 4.6.7 At the southern end of the defensive circuit, one of the town's most iconic structures, the South Gate also dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century and was repaired in 1416, rebuilt in 1437, restored or perhaps refaced in 1520, and restored again at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the Civil War, a drawbridge was added to the gate, as was also the case with the East Gate.<sup>154</sup> The development and later occupation of the South Gate area was subject to a detailed historical assessment by Historic England as part of the HAZ programme, the results of which have been incorporated into the UAD.<sup>155</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> NHER 64056 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72097>).

<sup>147</sup> NHER 64065 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72125>).

<sup>148</sup> NHER 64058 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72099>).

<sup>149</sup> NHER 64064 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72123>).

<sup>150</sup> NHER 62653 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF70240>).

<sup>151</sup> NHER 5478 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5478>).

<sup>152</sup> NHER 64059 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72104>).

<sup>153</sup> NHER 64060 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72105>).

<sup>154</sup> NHER 64061 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72106>).

<sup>155</sup> Carmichael *et al.* 2018.

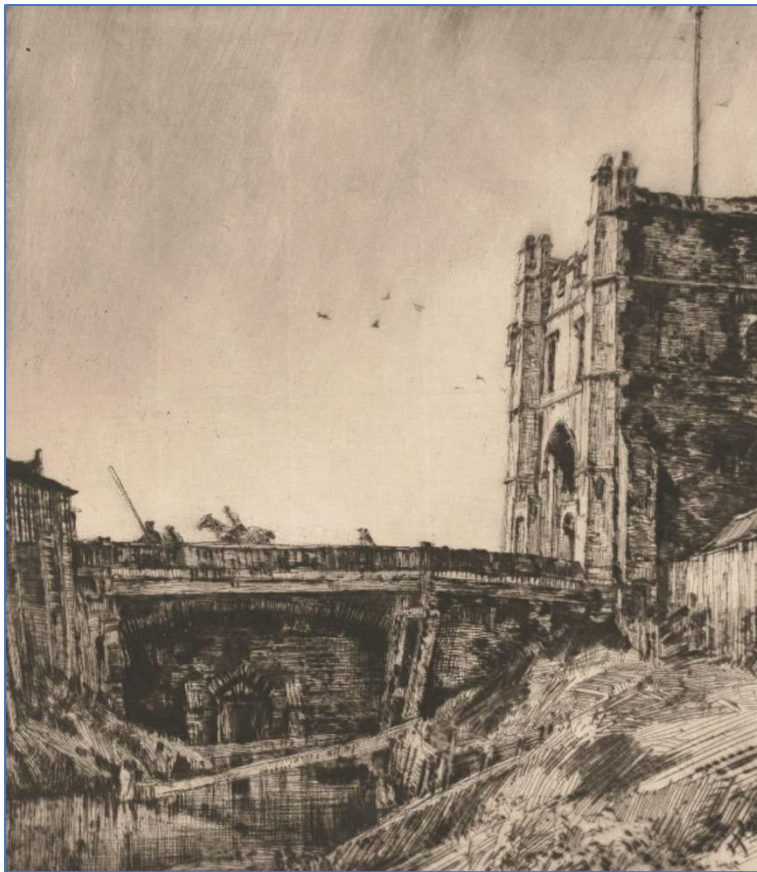


Figure 26. Drawing of the 'South Gate, King's Lynn' by Sir Muirhead Bone, 1904. (Boston Public Library)

4.6.8 The town defences were strengthened in the 16<sup>th</sup> century following Henry VIII's takeover of the control of the town from the bishop. In 1570, the threat of invasion prompted the construction of a small fort, known as St Anne's Fort, at the northern end of the town in the angle between the Fisher Fleet and the Ouse.<sup>156</sup> This fort was later endowed with guns in 1626 and rebuilt in 1778, but had fallen out of use by 1839. All that remains of this fort now are infilled brick arches and traces of former vaulting incorporated into later structures.

## 4.7 The Civil War

4.7.1 When the Civil War broke out the town declared for Parliament and the town's defences were augmented and put in order. This included the construction or renewal of drawbridges on the East and South Gates and the stepping up of the town guard. In 1642, the construction of additional defences began under the auspices of a local engineer called Christian, and by the end of the year the existing earthworks of the medieval defences had been improved and additional earthworks were apparently created to the north of the town.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>156</sup> NHER 64052 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72012>).

<sup>157</sup> Kent 1988, 223–32; Flintham 2021.



- 4.7.2 In late 1643, a coup installed the royalist Sir Hamon L'Estrange as the town's governor and the town's Members of Parliament were arrested. Having shut the gates to Parliament, work began again on the town's defences and houses which might have obstructed them were pulled down. By August 1645 the town was garrisoned by 1,500 soldiers, three or four troops of horses, 40 pieces of ordnance, 1,200 muskets and 500 barrels of gunpowder.<sup>158</sup>
- 4.7.3 In response, Parliament set up a land- and sea-based blockade of the town and the town was besieged from 28 August 1645. The Parliamentary forces occupied West Lynn on the opposite side of the river to the town, from where they were able to fire cannon into the town. In one famous incident, a cannon ball went through the west window of St Margaret's church during a service! A further battery was established to the north of the town, siegeworks were also established outside the East and South Gates, and the course of the Gaywood was diverted to cut off the water supply to the town. Ultimately, a major assault on the town was threatened and the town surrendered on 16 September 1643.<sup>159</sup>
- 4.7.4 As a result, King's Lynn became the principal logistical centre for the Parliamentary Army of the Eastern Association, capitalising on all of the factors which had made King's Lynn such a successful medieval port in the preceding centuries. As part of this new role, the Parliamentarians also set about augmenting the existing defences of the town with new fortifications designed by a local physician and mathematician called Richard Clampe, some of whose plans still survive, and the new fortifications transformed the town into what has been described as the strongest fortress in East Anglia.<sup>160</sup>
- 4.7.5 To the south, these new defences included a small fort situated on the Boal to guard the approach to the Nar. Known as the 'World's End' fort, the structure was depicted on Bell's map of 1680, but had apparently been removed by 1725.<sup>161</sup> To the south of the Nar, the new outworks included an large hexagonal bastion and a rectangular bastion, while another large bastion protected the south gate of the town and the crossing of the river.<sup>162</sup> As part of these works, a small fort was constructed outside the South Gate, which was depicted on Bell's map of 1680 (Figures 28–30) and Rastrick's map of 1725, and is believed to be the only known evidence for brick structures associated with the Civil War defences.<sup>163</sup>

---

<sup>158</sup> Kent 1988, 223–32; Yaxley 1993; Flintham 2021.

<sup>159</sup> Kent 1988, 223–32; Yaxley 1993; Flintham 2021.

<sup>160</sup> Kent 1988, 223–32; Flintham 2021.

<sup>161</sup> NHER 62950 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF70645>).

<sup>162</sup> NHER 5486 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5486>).

<sup>163</sup> NHER 64067 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72127>).

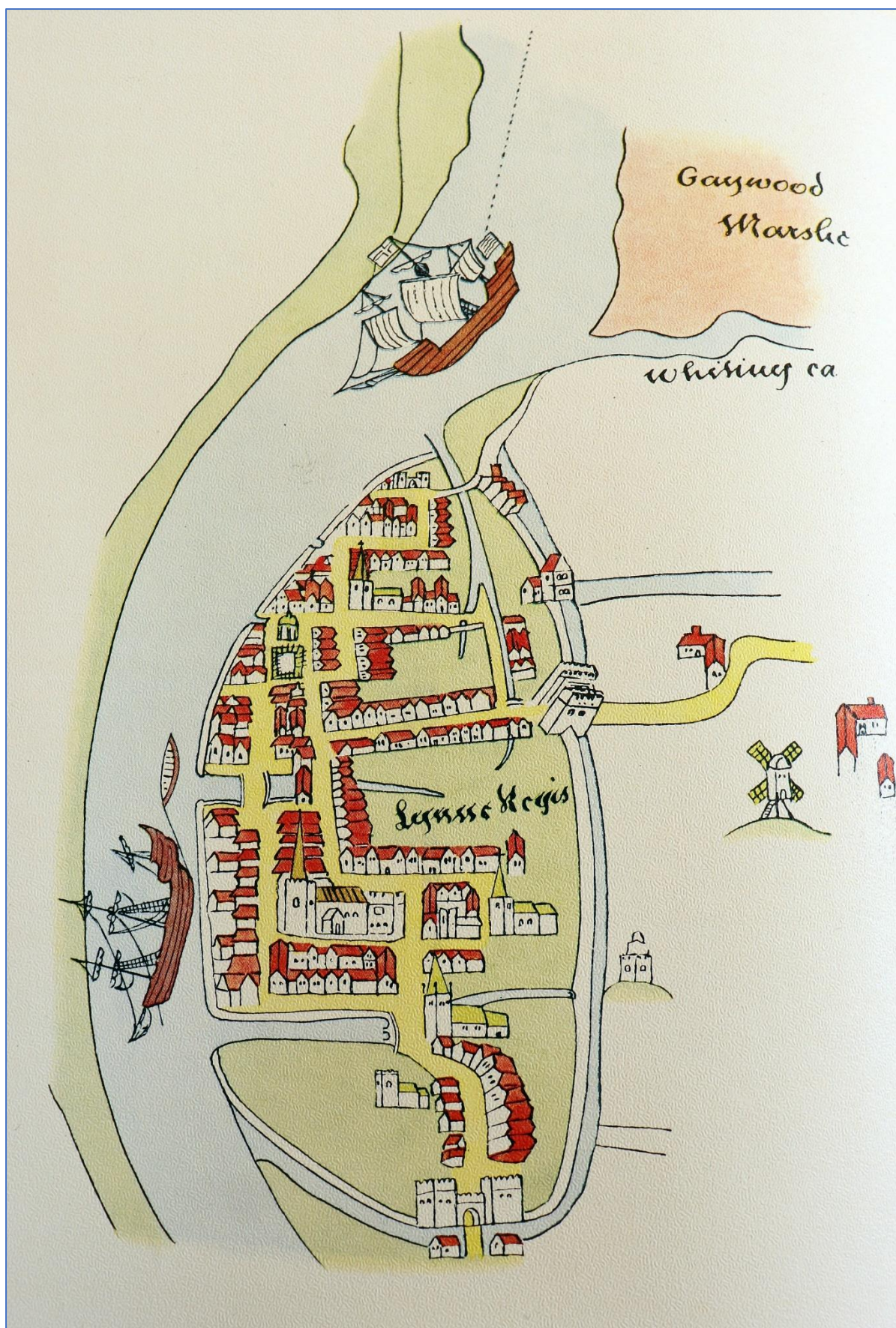


Figure 27. A stylised pictorial map of King's Lynn redrawn from a map of Rising Chase dating from 1588. (Redrawn by and reproduced from Bradfer-Lawrence 1929)



- 4.7.6 To the north, the new earthworks comprised an outer ditch and bank, equipped with three large hexagonal bastions, and an inner bank based on the artificial Loke channel, which was equipped with two small bastions.<sup>164</sup> A small blockhouse is first recorded to the north of St Anne's Fort in 1650, although neither St Anne's Fort or the blockhouse apparently played a active part in the town's Civil War defences.<sup>165</sup>
- 4.7.7 To the north-east of the south gate, the eastern side of the town was protected by a rhomboidal bastion constructed forward of the line of the medieval defences, together with three more hexagonal bastions which complemented that already surrounding the Red Mount Chapel. The northernmost and smallest of these bastions protected the position of the east gate.<sup>166</sup>
- 4.7.8 The extent and character of these defences was illustrated by Hollar in 1660 (Figures 28 and 29) and by Bell in 1680 (Figure 32), while later maps indicate that many elements of the Civil War defences were removed during the course of the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Very little evidence for King's Lynn's Civil War defences survives above ground today, barring some slight earthworks and water-filled ditches, but they have recently become the focus of a community archaeology project – King's Lynn Under Siege – which has conducted fieldwork around the town and continues to do so at the time of writing.<sup>167</sup> While fieldwork undertaken by the KLUS project to the south-west of the town revealed no trace of the former Civil War defences, not least because the later Harbour Railway ran across them,<sup>168</sup> fieldwork to the north-east of the town revealed significant evidence for the defences surviving within the now-suburban landscape to the west of Raby Avenue.<sup>169</sup>

## 4.8 The Post-Medieval Town

- 4.8.1 Our understanding of the later development of King's Lynn is greatly informed by the series of very detailed historical maps which began to be produced from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, as well as by the plethora of standing historic buildings and rich historical records pertaining to the period.<sup>170</sup> We also owe a great debt to the early historians of the town, such as Benjamin Mackerell, whose *History and Antiquities of the Flourishing Corporation of King's*

<sup>164</sup> NHER 5486 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5486>).

<sup>165</sup> NHER 64053 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72121>).

<sup>166</sup> NHER 5486 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5486>).

<sup>167</sup> <https://vauban.co.uk/king-s-lynn-under-siege> and <https://www.militaryhistorylive.co.uk/mhl-kings-lynn-under-siege.html>

<sup>168</sup> NHER 13593 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF13593>)

<sup>169</sup> ENF151501; ENF151929.

<sup>170</sup> E.g. Parker 1971; Owen 1984.



*Lynn* was published in 1738,<sup>171</sup> William Richards, whose two-volume *History of Lynn* was published in 1812,<sup>172</sup> and William Taylor, whose *Antiquities of King's Lynn* was published in 1844.<sup>173</sup> The picture is completed by later historians, such as Edward Beloe, whose *Our Borough, Our Churches* was published in 1899.<sup>174</sup> In 1907, Henry Hillen produced his own two-part *History of the Borough of King's Lynn*,<sup>175</sup> which represented the first attempt at a comprehensive history of the town and his work, in particular, has informed much of the research undertaken during the last century.

- 4.8.2 A very stylised impression of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century extent and layout of King's Lynn was captured in a 1588 map of Castle Rising Chase, which featured King's Lynn in its bottom left-hand corner (Figure 27). This map illustrated many of the features discussed above and gives us a strong sense of the character of the settlement at this point in time. The Millfleet and the Purfleet are clearly depicted, as are St Margaret's church and All Saints' church, St James's chapel and St Nicholas's chapel, and the site of the former Carmelite friary. Interestingly, the Red Mount Chapel is shown outside the line of the defences. The elongated warehouses extending to the quayside from King Street and Queen Street are indicated, as is the Tuesday Market, with its market cross. The circuit of the town defences is also shown, in which the South Gate and the East Gate feature prominently, although the North Gate is less clear. Also in evidence is the large area of open ground which existed between the built form of the town, focussed on the river, and the line of the town's defences.
- 4.8.3 Our earliest and most comprehensive view of the town is that created by Wenceslaus Hollar about 1660 (Figures 28 and 29).<sup>176</sup> One of the premier engravers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Hollar presented a 'groundplat' of the town, which recorded the street-plan and buildings in intricate detail, augmented by a numbered key identifying significant buildings. This was complemented by an engraving of 'The prospect of King's Lynn from the West', which presented a view of the town from across the river in West Lynn, again with key buildings identified using the key (Figures 28, 30 and 31). One of the most important aspects of Hollar's plan is the clear depiction he offered of the Civil War defences of the town, and his work has greatly informed our understanding of the development of these defences during the course of the 1640s, such as the fortifications outside the South Gate and on the Boal.

<sup>171</sup> Mackerell 1738: <https://archive.org/details/historyandantiq00mackgoog>

<sup>172</sup> Richards 1812: <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=sTcGAQAIAAJ>

<sup>173</sup> Taylor 1844: <https://archive.org/details/antiquitiesofkin00tayluoft>

<sup>174</sup> Beloe 1899: [https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=sL\\_MO1hel2UC](https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=sL_MO1hel2UC)

<sup>175</sup> Hillen 1907: <https://archive.org/details/historyofborough01hill>

<sup>176</sup> [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1d/Wenceslas\\_Hollar - Kings\\_Lynn.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1d/Wenceslas_Hollar_-_Kings_Lynn.jpg)



Figure 28. Wenceslaus Hollar's 'Prospect of Kings Lyn from the West' and 'Groundplat of King's Lyn' of about 1660.

4.8.4 Of particular interest are Hollar's incidental details about the layout of the town and the structures contained within it. The churches, for example, are very clearly illustrated, as are the former friaries and street frontages, but we are also given details such as the market cross which stood within the Tuesday Market and the 'shambles' which was also established there.<sup>177</sup> We know from complementary historical and architectural sources that the majority of the medieval timber buildings within the town were replaced or refaced with brick during the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, with materials being acquired from the dissolved monastic houses or from newly established local brick kilns. Similarly, thatch was identified as a fire risk, and buildings were re-roofed in tile.<sup>178</sup> Many warehouses were rebuilt in brick, often with water-gates, and a particularly fine example survives to the rear of Clifton House, on Queen Street.<sup>179</sup> Clifton House also features a five-storey brick tower constructed in the 1580s from which merchants could watch for ships (Figure 16). Other examples of such towers are thought to have existed within the town, but have not survived.

<sup>177</sup> NHER 5550 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5550>)

<sup>178</sup> Parker 1971; Richards 1990, 9–12.

<sup>179</sup> NHER 5535 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5535>).





Figure 29. Detail of Wenceslaus Hollar's 'Groundplat of King's Lyn' of about 1660.





Figure 30. Detail of Wenceslaus Hollar's 'Prospect of King's Lyn from the West' of about 1660.



Figure 31. Detail of Wenceslaus Hollar's 'Prospect of King's Lyn from the West' of about 1660.



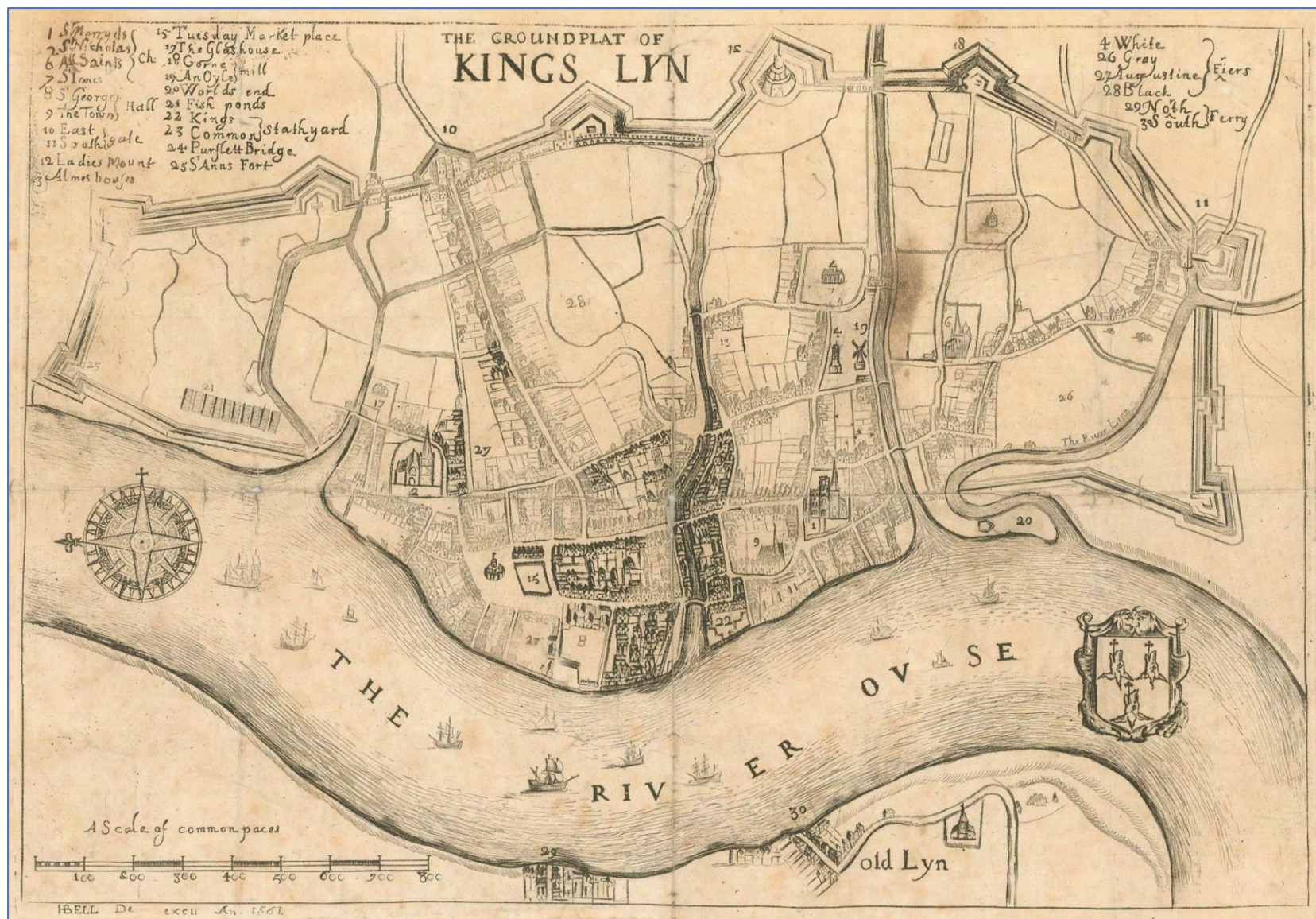


Figure 32. Henry Bell's version of the 'Groundplat of King's Lyn' of about 1680.



- 4.8.5 Also very instructive is Hollar's depiction of the waterfront in this period, which shows the King's Staitheyard on the southern side of the entrance to the Purfleet and the Common Staitheyard to the west of the Tuesday Market, both of which were redeveloped during this period. The area of the Common Staithe was subject to a desk-based assessment and archaeological borehole survey as part of the HAZ programme, which describes the site as the 'mercantile centre of Early Modern Lynn' and presents a detailed overview of the various buildings which surround the site today, including Georgian and later warehouses, a Victorian pilot office and also an early example of a Victorian Public Baths.<sup>180</sup> The borehole survey confirmed the interpretation offered by the maps, indicating the utilisation of the foreshore and dumping of rubbish during the late 12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries, prior to the major ground-raising and reclamation by the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as is suggested by both the Castle Rising map (Figure 27) and Hollar's groundplat (Figures 28 and 29).<sup>181</sup>
- 4.8.6 Hollar's plan is complemented by a similar groundplat produced by Henry Bell in about 1680, which again shows the full extent of the town and its Civil War defences, together with a street plan with annotated features (Figure 32).<sup>182</sup> Comparison of the two maps shows a very close correlation between the two, the implication being that Bell derived much of the detail of his own groundplat, even down to the numbering of the features, from Hollar's earlier plan. Indeed, there is little shown in Bell's plan which is not shown in the earlier image.
- 4.8.7 From the late 17<sup>th</sup> until the late 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the town benefitted from the prosperity brought about in particular by the wine trade.<sup>183</sup> Something of the emerging grandeur of the town during this period is captured in the map produced by Rastrick in his *Ichnographia Burgi perantiqui Lennae Regis* of 1725 (Figure 33).<sup>184</sup> As discussed above, the map indicates the degree to which elements of the Civil War defences had been done away with by this period, and also draws attention to key changes which had occurred in the town, such as the fact that by this date St James's chapel had become a workhouse.<sup>185</sup> Also clearly shown for the first time is the one of the town's most well-known buildings, the Custom House, built to the north of the Purfleet by Henry Bell in 1683 (Figure 34). The building was originally a merchants' exchange, with the building serving as a customs house from the 18<sup>th</sup> century

---

<sup>180</sup> NHER 12917 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF12917>); Kewley 2018.

<sup>181</sup> Stafford and Howsam 2022.

<sup>182</sup> <https://www.crouchrarebooks.com/maps/a-plat-of-kings-lynn>

<sup>183</sup> Hankinson 2005.

<sup>184</sup> <https://www.vintage-maps.com/en/antique-maps/europe/british-isles/rastrick-british-isles-norfolk-king-s-lynn-1725::950>

<sup>185</sup> NHER 5484 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5484>).







Figure 34. Aerial view of the Purfleet, looking east, showing the Custom House. (Photo: Mike Page, taken 22 October 2005)

until 1989.<sup>186</sup> Another of Bell's works is depicted standing close by in the Tuesday Market, where in 1710 he constructed a replacement Market Cross comprising an octagonal chamber supported on 16 columns, although this had to be demolished in 1829 due to subsidence.<sup>187</sup>

4.8.8 Further information is provided by an engraved view of the town viewed from the east was published by the Buck brothers in 1741, in which the town's wall and its associated towers and gates are clearly depicted, together with the remnants of the enhancements made to the defences during the Civil War (Figures 35–37).<sup>188</sup> Although the engraving is thought to exaggerate the character of the defences, detailed analyses of the image have indicated that the details of the individual elements of the defences, such as the towers and gates, are accurate.<sup>189</sup> The Bucks brothers' engraving also captures the mast-heads and sails visible beyond the town, which convey how busy the port remained during this period.

<sup>186</sup> NHER 5479 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5479>).

<sup>187</sup> NHER 5550 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5550>).

<sup>188</sup> <https://g.co/arts/ByBxDsPPAhw6vaaY9>

<sup>189</sup> Smith 1970; Kent 1988.





Figure 35. The Buck Brothers' 'East Prospect of Lynn-Regis', published in 1741.





Figure 36. Detail of the Buck Brothers' 'East Prospect of Lynn-Regis', published in 1741.



EGIS, IN THE COUNTY OF NORFOLK.



that King exchanging the Monastery and Revenue of S<sup>t</sup>. Bennet of Hulme, and other Lands, for the Revenue of  
 which have about 15 Bridges over them. It has been honour'd with 15 Royal Charters, particularly one of 6<sup>th</sup> Year  
 himself a Provost; the same King being then at Lynn, gave to this Corporation in Consideration of their faithfull  
 every 3<sup>d</sup> was also assist'd by this Town against the Barons, a great many of the Inhabitants being slain near  
 them by the succeeding Kings, particularly by K<sup>ing</sup>. Henry 8<sup>th</sup> who in the 16<sup>th</sup> Year of his Reign granted if pre-  
 in the 20<sup>th</sup> Year of his Reign, it is also obtained that the Name of Bishops Lynn, which it had before, should  
 Parliament are, The Right Hon<sup>ble</sup>. R<sup>obert</sup> Walpole, and S<sup>t</sup>. John Turner Bar.

John Temple, London.

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. South Gate.....                         | 8. Trinity Hall.....                    | 15. S <sup>t</sup> . Nicholas's Chapel..... |
| 2. The Red Mount.....                      | 9. Meeting House.....                   | 16. The River Cuse.....                     |
| 3. All Saints Church.....                  | 10. East Gate.....                      | 17. The Road to Norwich.....                |
| 4. S <sup>t</sup> . James's Workhouse..... | 11. Old Lynn.....                       | 17. near which this Drawing                 |
| 5. Grey Friars' Steple.....                | 12. Custom House.....                   | was taken.....                              |
| 6. S <sup>t</sup> . Margaret's Church..... | 13. S <sup>t</sup> . George's Hall..... |   |
| 7. The Free School.....                    | 14. The Croft.....                      |   |

Figure 37. Detail of the Buck Brothers' 'East Prospect of Lynn-Regis', published in 1741.



- 4.8.9 We know from architectural and historical sources that a considerable degree of gentrification occurred in the town during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as is reflected in the town's rich stock of surviving Georgian buildings. Many of the grander buildings fronting onto the Tuesday Market were remodelled or rebuilt during this period, as was also the case along those roads leading to the Market, especially King Street, Queen Street and Nelson Street.<sup>190</sup> Surviving examples of 18<sup>th</sup>-century buildings include what is now the Barclay's Bank on the Tuesday Market Place, which was constructed as mansion and became the Gurney's Bank in 1869,<sup>191</sup> and the brick-faced Lath Mansion, which was constructed at 15 Nelson Street.<sup>192</sup> Likewise, examples of the refaced buildings include the 16<sup>th</sup>-century timber-framed 27 King Street, the frontage of which was remodelled in limestone shortly after 1715.<sup>193</sup> So extensive was the scale of the rebuilding that by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the town was estimated to contain '2,000 good brick houses'.<sup>194</sup>
- 4.8.10 In addition to the existing trades and industries, during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, whaling became one of the major economic activities of the town, especially in the area of South Lynn, with several whaling ships sailing from the port to Greenland in March and returning with their cargoes in the summer months. In order to process the carcasses, several blubberhouses were established to the south of the town and an offshoot of the Nar became known as 'Blubberhouse Creek'. One blubberhouse constructed in 1776 was still standing in 1906,<sup>195</sup> while another on the opposite side of the river was still extant in 1868, but had gone by 1906.<sup>196</sup> A timber-framed house constructed in 1605, thought to be the last timber-framed house built in the town, had become the Greenland Fishery public house by 1761, serving those working in the whaling industry, and was still known by that name in 1899.<sup>197</sup>
- 4.8.11 The redevelopments of the 18<sup>th</sup> century are captured in Faden's map of Norfolk, which was surveyed between 1790 and 1794 and published in 1797, which featured an inset large-scale map of King's Lynn (Figure 38).<sup>198</sup> Although not showing as much detail as the maps discussed above, Faden's map particularly captures one of the most significant

<sup>190</sup> Pevsner and Wilson 1999, 459–506; Richards 1990, 12–13.

<sup>191</sup> NHER 12918 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF12918>).

<sup>192</sup> NHER 21610 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF21610>).

<sup>193</sup> NHER 12915 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF12915>).

<sup>194</sup> Quoted in Richards 1990, 13.

<sup>195</sup> NHER 63566 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71933>).

<sup>196</sup> NHER 63567 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71934>).

<sup>197</sup> NHER 5482 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5482>).

<sup>198</sup> [http://maps.norfolk.gov.uk/highways/historic/faden\\_norfolk1.htm](http://maps.norfolk.gov.uk/highways/historic/faden_norfolk1.htm)

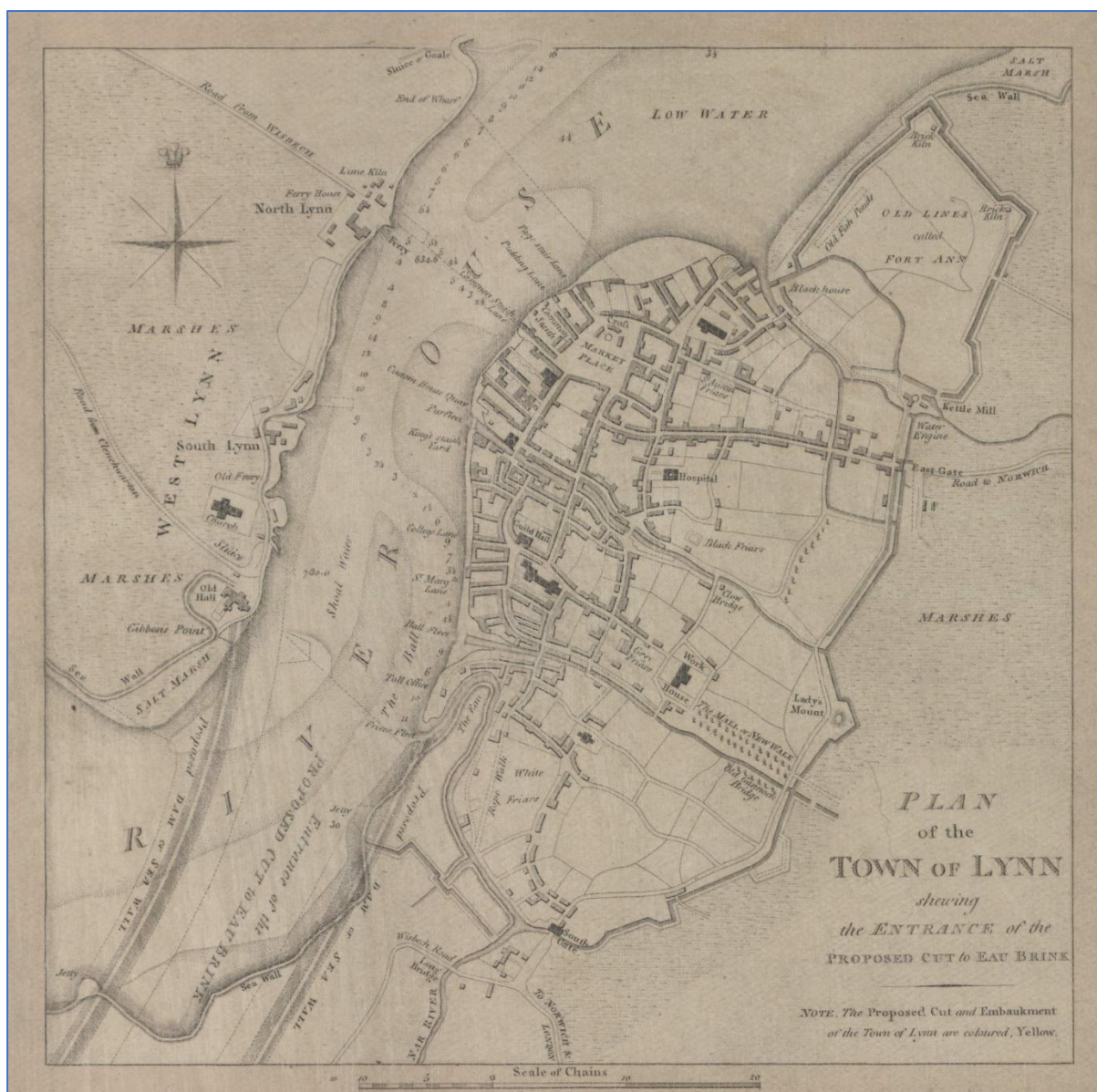


Figure 38. Inset map of King's Lynn from Faden's Map of Norfolk, published in 1797.

improvements made to the town during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the landscaping of the open ground which lay between the town and the medieval defences. Faden shows 'The Mall or New Walk', now known as The Walks, one of the earliest surviving Town Walks in the country and first laid out in 1713. Significant phases of expansion and planting taking place throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>199</sup> Faden's map is also significant for showing the line of the proposed Eau Brink cut. This artificial waterway designed to remove a bend in the Great Ouse had just been granted consent at the time of Faden's survey, but was eventually constructed in 1821 and extended northwards in 1853 by the Norfolk Estuary Company.<sup>200</sup>

<sup>199</sup> NHER 33479 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF33479>); NHLE Entry No. 1001374: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001374>

<sup>200</sup> NHER 13532 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF13532>).

- 4.8.12 By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, numerous small dwellings had developed in the town, many of them clustered around existing courts and yards in which merchants had previously stored goods. By 1831, there were some 3,000 houses in King's Lynn, of which about 1,000 were situated in such yards, connected to the main roads by narrow passageways. Norfolk Street, for example, was linked to 29 yards, which accommodated 750 people in 170 cottages.<sup>201</sup> These yards survived until the 1930s, when they were finally demolished. In 1790, the mayor of King's Lynn began working towards securing an act of parliament to secure the 'paving, cleansing, lighting, watching and improvement' of the town, in line with those enacted in many other cities and major towns by this date. Following a prolonged period of local dissent, during which the progress of the Bill was delayed, the King's Lynn Paving Act was granted royal assent in May 1803.<sup>202</sup> In addition to the general aims of improvement of the town, the Act specifically required the construction of a new road between the South Gate and St James's Street, and London Road was constructed for this purpose in 1805, being flanked by 'handsome' and 'elegant' houses. The construction of the new road drew the town southwards, and the population of South Lynn grew from 701 in 1801 to 4,772 in 1851. Of the 1,384 houses built in the town between 1821 and 1851, half lay within South Lynn.<sup>203</sup>
- 4.8.13 A second Paving Act was passed in 1806 in order to raise additional revenue, and in 1807 the street names which are still in use today were implemented, many of which replaced earlier names or named streets for the first time. By 1820 most of the existing streets had been surveyed, widened and newly paved. Likewise, many of the town's bridges were made lower and wider, with the aim of improving the convenience of movement around the town. Many of the buildings were refaced in the Georgian style using locally produced brown bricks, and characteristic rounded corners were introduced to buildings which flanked street junctions. In many cases, the improvement process required the façade of a building to be set back, with grants and compensation paid to owners or the works being carried out directly.<sup>204</sup> The process even resulted in the demolition of the Trinity Chapel at the north-eastern corner of St Margaret's church, which encroached too far into the Saturday Market place.<sup>205</sup>
- 4.8.14 The spiritual needs of the expanding population are reflected in the range of new churches, chapels and burial grounds which were established during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. St James's burial ground (now St James's Park) was established with an attendant chapel in

---

<sup>201</sup> Richards 1990, 13–14; Higgins 2008, 47–9.

<sup>202</sup> Higgins 2008, 7–8.

<sup>203</sup> Richards 1990, 13–14; Higgins 2008, 49–52.

<sup>204</sup> Higgins 2008, 3–15.

<sup>205</sup> NHER 1026 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF1026>).



1805 to accommodate the demands placed on the existing churchyards by the growing population.<sup>206</sup> Likewise, All Saints' parish opened an additional burial ground at Hardwick in 1855, which superseded that at St James's and grew to become the borough cemetery.<sup>207</sup> The Anglican church of St John the Evangelist was founded on Blackfriars Street in 1846,<sup>208</sup> a Jewish cemetery was established on Millfleet and used between at least 1811 and 1846,<sup>209</sup> and a Roman Catholic chapel designed by Pugin was constructed in 1845,<sup>210</sup> the site now being occupied by the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation, built in 1896.<sup>211</sup>

4.8.15 The town had a large Nonconformist population. A Quaker Meeting House existed on New Conduit Street by 1741, and this was rebuilt in 1774 and extended in 1883.<sup>212</sup> The building was sold in 1949 and demolished, although the associated burial ground was excavated in 2005.<sup>213</sup> A second Quaker burial ground was located to the rear of Buckingham Terrace and is marked on late 19<sup>th</sup>-century maps.<sup>214</sup> A Presbyterian chapel was erected on Broad Street in 1777, and this was taken over by the Congregationalists in 1802 until they moved to their new chapel on New Conduit Street in 1838.<sup>215</sup> A Baptist Chapel was built on Broad Street in 1808 and demolished in the 1960s.<sup>216</sup> A Unitarian Baptist Chapel was built in 1811 and closed in 1867, but only demolished in 1970.<sup>217</sup> The Stepney Baptist Chapel was built in 1841,<sup>218</sup> the Highgate Methodist Chapel was built in 1850 and rebuilt in 1883,<sup>219</sup> and the London Road Methodist Chapel was built in 1858.<sup>220</sup> A Union Baptist Chapel built in 1859, was replaced by the Wisbech Road Baptist Chapel in 1900,<sup>221</sup> with the original building becoming Lynn Museum.<sup>222</sup> A Wesleyan chapel was built at the northern end of the town in 1862, acquired by the Primitive Methodists before 1907 and fell out of use in 1932.<sup>223</sup>

---

<sup>206</sup> NHER 63573 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72010>).

<sup>207</sup> NHER 33509 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF63573>).

<sup>208</sup> NHER 5552 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF5552>).

<sup>209</sup> NHER 34292 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF34292>).

<sup>210</sup> NHER 60546 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF66805>).

<sup>211</sup> NHER 48952 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF56666>).

<sup>212</sup> NHER 63553 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71903>).

<sup>213</sup> NHER 37719 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF42149>);  
NHER 37722 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF42152>).

<sup>214</sup> NHER 62807 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71196>).

<sup>215</sup> NHER 63549 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71854>);  
NHER 63551 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71901>).

<sup>216</sup> NHER 63552 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71904>).

<sup>217</sup> NHER 58304 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF64511>).

<sup>218</sup> NHER 9375 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF9375>).

<sup>219</sup> NHER 62872 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71377>).

<sup>220</sup> NHER 48907 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF53965>).

<sup>221</sup> NHER 62854 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71359>).

<sup>222</sup> NHER 35372 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF39497>).

<sup>223</sup> NHER 62897 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71405>).



Figure 39. Burnet's plan of King's Lynn of 1846.

- 4.8.16 The extent to which the Paving Commissioners affected the town by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century is captured in Burnet's plan of King's Lynn of 1846, which shows the newly-named and improved streets of the historic core of the town, together with the new London Road and the extensive expansion of South Lynn which it brought about (Figure 39). The map also shows the newly constructed railway station at the east of the town, although this was not opened until the following year. Other features of interest shown on the map include the location of the Theatre Royal, which was constructed beside the Greyfriars Tower in 1813, but was destroyed by fire in 1936.<sup>224</sup> The building was replaced by a new theatre in 1937 and converted to a bingo hall in 1962.<sup>225</sup> To the south of The Walks, the Lynn and West Norfolk General Hospital was opened in 1835 and superseded by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the early 1980s.<sup>226</sup> Outside the South Gate, the map depicts the King's Lynn gasworks, established in 1825 to provide gas for lighting and other purposes. The gasworks developed throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, before closing in the early 1960s. Many of the buildings were demolished in 1964, although the gasometers stood until 1988.<sup>227</sup>
- 4.8.17 As well as expanding southwards, during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the town also began to expand to the east as a result of the railway reaching the town. The first incarnation of the train station opened at the eastern side of the town in 1847, linking Lynn to Ely,<sup>228</sup> although the current station was constructed for the Great Eastern Railway in 1871–2.<sup>229</sup> During the following decades, numerous extensions to the line were created to serve the town and link it to other places. In 1847, the Lynn to Dereham line was opened, and remained until 1968.<sup>230</sup> In 1856, the King's Lynn Harbour Railway was opened which carried the line across the Nar and the Purfleet. The line served the newly reconstructed South Quay, which had been completed in 1855, and the line remained open until 1968.<sup>231</sup> The King's Lynn to Hunstanton railway, via Sandringham and Heacham, was opened in 1862 and closed in 1969.<sup>232</sup> In 1864, the railway between King's Lynn and Sutton Bridge was opened by the Lynn and Sutton Bridge Railway, part of the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway, which connected with Great Yarmouth. The whole line was closed in 1959.<sup>233</sup>

<sup>224</sup> NHER 64027 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72092>).

<sup>225</sup> NHER 64028 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF72093>).

<sup>226</sup> <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/hospitalrecords/details.asp?id=2919>

<sup>227</sup> NHER 62805 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71128>).

<sup>228</sup> NHER 13594 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF13594>).

<sup>229</sup> NHER 51301 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF56526>).

<sup>230</sup> NHER 13600 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF13600>).

<sup>231</sup> NHER 13593 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF13593>).

<sup>232</sup> NHER 13591 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF13591>).

<sup>233</sup> NHER 13581 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF13581>).





Figure 40. King's Lynn depicted on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey six-inch-to-one-mile map, surveyed in 1884 and published in 1886.

4.8.18 The decade following the arrival of the railway saw a housing boom in the town, and between 1841 and 1851 the population of the town rose by over 3,000, with 549 new houses. However, when the construction of the railway was finished and the northern extension of the Eau Brink cut was completed in 1853, many of the workers moved away leaving hundreds of empty houses and causing development to flounder.<sup>234</sup> In 1859, the King's Lynn, Waterworks, Markets and Borough Improvement Act was passed, which granted the Paving Commissioners additional responsibilities for public health. Under this broader remit, they were responsible for filling in the Purfleet and widening New Conduit Street, before their powers were transferred to the town Corporation under the Public Health Act of 1872. In a similar fashion, in 1898 the Millfleet was finally filled in and the road widened over the top of it.

<sup>234</sup> Higgins 2008, 53–61.



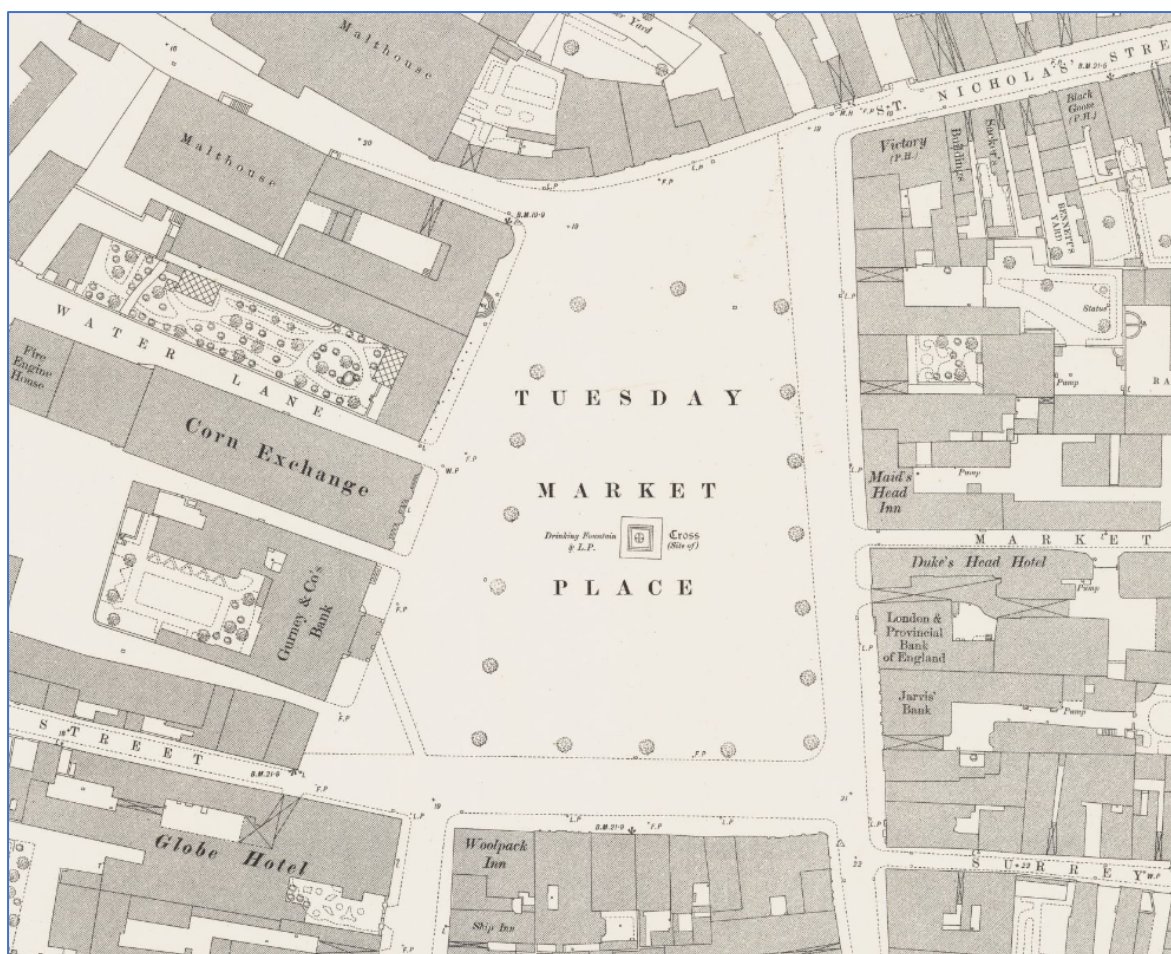


Figure 41. Detail of the Tuesday Market Place from the Ordnance Survey Town Plan, published in 1886.



Figure 42. Detail of the railway station from the Ordnance Survey Town Plan, published in 1886.

- 4.8.19 By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the medieval town had been transformed and expanded into one characterised by Georgian architecture or in the Georgian style, fronted in brown brick and featuring rounded corners. The number of houses had doubled, with the majority of the new housing standing between the historic core of the town and the defences. The results of this dramatic expansion were captured by the Ordnance Survey, which began to produce maps of the town from the 1880s onwards. An overview of the town is given by the six-inch-to-one-mile series, the First Edition of which was surveyed in 1884 and published in 1886 (Figure 40).<sup>235</sup> The Ordnance Survey also published a more detailed King's Lynn Town Plan, based on the same survey and also published in 1886, which depicted the town at a scale of 1:500. Scans of the individual sheets of this survey can be accessed via the National Library of Scotland website.<sup>236</sup> The Town Plan was so detailed that it recorded the footprints of individual buildings, outbuildings, covered passageways between buildings and the layouts of gardens. Significant public buildings, private residences and businesses are identified by name, including churches, chapels, banks, brickworks and public houses, as well as more mundane features such as drinking fountains (Figure 41). The infrastructure of the railway, including the tracks, junctions, engine sheds and signal boxes, is also depicted (Figure 42).
- 4.8.20 The new rail links and the increasing size of cargo ships enabled much greater loads to be transported by sea, which in turn created a need for larger docks to accommodate trade of this scale. As with many other eastern ports, this led to the creation of new and larger docks and increased port-side handling facilities. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Alexandra Dock and the Bentinck Dock were constructed at the north-western extent of the town in an effort to attract sea-borne trade to the town. The irregularly shaped Alexandra Dock was constructed in 1868–9,<sup>237</sup> and was served by its own light railway, constructed in 1870, which connected the dock to a junction near the railway station.<sup>238</sup> Following the success of the Alexandra Dock, in 1883 the Bentinck Dock was constructed as an inner extension, connected to it by a pair of lock gates (Figure 43).<sup>239</sup> The rail connection has since disappeared, but the pair of docks continue to form the major focus of the Port of King's Lynn complex, which was the subject of a specific heritage assessment undertaken as part of the England's North Sea Ports project in 2016.<sup>240</sup>

---

<sup>235</sup> OS Norfolk Sheet XXXII.SW: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/101581658>

<sup>236</sup> <https://maps.nls.uk/>

<sup>237</sup> NHER 63570 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71937>).

<sup>238</sup> NHER 13592 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF13592>).

<sup>239</sup> NHER 63571 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71938>).

<sup>240</sup> Cornwall Archaeological Unit 2016: <https://doi.org/10.5284/1040801>





Figure 43. Aerial view of King the Port of King's Lynn, looking east, with the Alexandra Dock in the foreground and the Bentinck Dock beyond. (Photo: Mike Page)

4.8.21 In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, King's Lynn also became a centre for engineering, especially the manufacture and repair of agricultural and fairground machinery, as well as the development of fertiliser, sugar-beet and canning industries in the town.<sup>241</sup> Frederick Savage's engineering works were established in 1853 and moved to the St Nicholas's Works site in the 1870s. The firm became well known for the production of agricultural machinery and steam-powered fairground rides – using the slogan 'every class of roundabouts and plant for showmen'<sup>242</sup> – and Savage became the Mayor of King's Lynn in 1889. During the First World War, the firm was engaged in making aircraft.<sup>243</sup> Similarly, in 1875, an iron foundry was established by Alfred Dodman on Highgate Field, specialising in the production of boilers, traction engines and steam locomotives. During the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, the company shifted emphasis towards the petrochemical and North Sea industries, and the site was eventually cleared for residential development in 1977.<sup>244</sup> In 1872, a large industrial plant was established in South Lynn by West Norfolk Fertilisers. Known as the South Lynn Muck Works, the site remained one of the main industrial concerns in King's Lynn

<sup>241</sup> Hankinson 2005.

<sup>242</sup> Ingleby 1924, inside cover.

<sup>243</sup> NHER 13622 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNf13622>).

<sup>244</sup> NHER 55338 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNf61652>).

throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and eventually closed in 1967.<sup>245</sup> The Cooper Roller Bearings company was founded in 1894 and became a major employer in the town. The company has occupied a factory on Wisbech Road from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and several of the original factory buildings are still in use today.<sup>246</sup> In 1927, a large sugar beet factory was constructed on Saddlebow Road and served by its own railway line.<sup>247</sup> The factory itself was eventually demolished in 1997.<sup>248</sup> One of many canning factories located in the town, the Lincolnshire Canners Ltd 'Lin-Can' factory was established in West Lynn by 1932 and stood until the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>249</sup> In 1959, the Campbell's Soup factory opened and was the first major Campbell's plant to be constructed outside America. The iconic cooling tower was the tallest building in the town. The factory closed in 2007 and was demolished in 2012.<sup>250</sup>

- 4.8.22 During the First World War, the town was subject to an air raid as two Zeppelins crossed the North Sea on 19 January 1915 and dropped bombs on Great Yarmouth, Sheringham and King's Lynn. On the Home Front, a large two-storey building constructed on the south side of St Nicholas's Street early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was used as a drill hall before and during the First World War, and continued to be referred to as such into the 1930s.<sup>251</sup> Other records indicate that troops were billeted at the King Edward VII school,<sup>252</sup> that the tower of the Carnegie Library was used as a lookout station,<sup>253</sup> and that the area to the east of the Red Mount Chapel was apparently used as a Prisoner of War Camp.<sup>254</sup> During the Second World War, the town was again subject to extensive air raids during which many inhabitants were killed and many parts of the town damaged. The town was defended by a network of pill boxes, some of which are still extant,<sup>255</sup> and the railway and roads were fortified with anti-tank cubes.<sup>256</sup> Wartime aerial photography also recorded a possible military camp and gun emplacement to the north of the docks.<sup>257</sup> The town was extensively equipped with air raid

---

<sup>245</sup> NHER24198 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF24198>).

<sup>246</sup> NHER 62855 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71361>).

<sup>247</sup> NHER 63569 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71936>).

<sup>248</sup> NHER 13755 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF13755>).

<sup>249</sup> NHER 56169 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF62558>).

<sup>250</sup> NHER 52755 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF57846>).

<sup>251</sup> NHER 63544 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71545>).

<sup>252</sup> NHER 34294 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF38394>).

<sup>253</sup> NHER 62803 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71003>).

<sup>254</sup> NHER 62813 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF71213>).

<sup>255</sup> NHER 38237 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF44504>);

NHER 41067 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF45704>);

NHER 38247 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF44508>);

NHER 38296 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF44513>).

<sup>256</sup> NHER 32378 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF32378>);

NHER 32379 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF32379>).

<sup>257</sup> NHER 27888 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF42707>).

shelters,<sup>258</sup> including a particularly good example at the Kettlewell Recreation Ground.<sup>259</sup>

After the war, a Prisoner of War camp was established at North Lynn Farm, which was subsequently replaced by the Dow Chemical factory.<sup>260</sup>

---

<sup>258</sup> NHER 39557 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF42747>);

NHER 64563 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF73378>);

NHER 64564 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF73379>).

<sup>259</sup> NHER 31205 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF31205>).

<sup>260</sup> NHER 38459 (<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF43223>).



## 5. Conclusion: Managing King's Lynn's Historic Environment

- 5.0.1 Throughout the medieval period, King's Lynn was one of the most important ports and commercial centres on the east coast. This brought great wealth to the town, which is reflected in its historic environment, particularly in its surviving historic buildings and its rich archaeological record. The town's low-lying position and the intensity of the medieval and post-medieval activity within it, especially on the waterfront, mean that there is high potential for deeply stratified, waterlogged archaeological deposits with associated artefacts and environmental remains. A detailed understanding of the archaeological record of the town, and in particular the depth, date and character of its underlying archaeological deposits is crucial if the historic environment is to be managed effectively and sites earmarked for development are to be unlocked.

### 5.1 The King's Lynn UAD

- 5.1.1 In order to further increase the understanding of King's Lynn's historic environment and ensure that this knowledge informed strategic decision-making across the Borough, the King's Lynn Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) was created within the existing framework of the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (HER), which underpins historic environment management processes, conservation, fieldwork, and research in the county. The King's Lynn UAD covers an area of 26.5 km<sup>2</sup> and encompasses the historic core of the town, as well as many of the town's suburbs and surrounding industrial estates, including the Port of King's Lynn, Riverside Industrial Estate and North Lynn Industrial Estate to the north, as well as the settlements of South and North Wootton (Figures 2 and 3). The eastern boundary follows the lines of the A148 Grimston Road to the Knight's Hill roundabout, then follows the A149 Queen Elizabeth Way southwards to the Hardwick roundabout, from where it follows the A47 to its junction for North Runcton. The southern boundary of the UAD area skirts around the north of North Runcton and extends southwards along the A10 to incorporate West Winch, as well as taking in the Hardwick Narrow Industrial Estate and the Saddlebow Industrial Estate. The western boundary of the UAD area follows the eastern bank of the Ouse, crossing the river to take in the settlement area of West Lynn and the East Coast Business Park on the western bank of the river. The majority of the UAD area comprises relatively flat, low-lying ground situated between 2m and 10m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), with the ground level rising to between 15m and 25m aOD in the south-eastern eastern and north-eastern parts of the UAD area. The historic core of King's Lynn lies upon slightly higher ground than its immediate hinterland, which to the north, south and east of

the town comprises lower-lying ground incorporating the river valleys of the Gaywood to the north-east and the Nar to the south-east, together with the small watercourses of the Purfleet and Millfleet which divide the historic core of the town into thirds.

- 5.1.2 The King's Lynn UAD contains archaeological evidence dating from the full range of human occupation, the vast majority of which pertains to the medieval and post-medieval periods during which the town and port of King's Lynn thrived. The King's Lynn UAD contains 1,201 monument records, of which 249 (20.7%) are new records created as part of this project; in addition, the remaining 952 pre-existing records (79.3%) have all been enhanced significantly (Figures 6 and 7). The digital mapping for each of these records has also been enhanced. Within this total are represented details of 464 known archaeological sites or monuments (38.6%), 241 artefact findspots (20%) and 442 historic buildings (36.8%). The remainder of the records is represented by minor structures, wrecks and 'negative evidence', that is, sites where fieldwork revealed no archaeological remains (54; 4.5%). In addition, the UAD contains 549 event records, which detail episodes of archaeological fieldwork or discovery. Of these, 289 (52%) have been newly created during the project and the remaining 260 events have been greatly enhanced (Figures 8 and 9). The creation of the UAD has also resulted in the addition of 179 additional bibliographic source records to the Norfolk HER, reflecting information not previously recorded in the database, and the modification of 442 existing bibliographic source records.

## 5.2 Existing Heritage Designations

- 5.2.1 The primary function of the King's Lynn UAD is as a management tool which can be used to assess the archaeological potential and importance of proposed development sites in order to inform planning decisions and strategic management of the historic environment. However, many aspects of the historic environment of the town and its hinterland are already afforded a degree of statutory protection through existing heritage designations.
- 5.2.2 Archaeological sites and ruins are designated as Scheduled Monuments under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979.<sup>261</sup> Any proposed works, including development, which might affect a Scheduled Monument are subject to the granting of Scheduled Monument Consent alongside any planning permission which may be required. In addition, each Scheduled Monument has a setting – defined as the area in which the monument is experienced – which may contribute to its significance and this setting can

---

<sup>261</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46/contents>

also be affected positively or negatively by development. Guidance on the assessment of the setting of designated heritage assets and the manner in which they may be impacted upon is set out by Historic England in their *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3*.<sup>262</sup>

- 5.2.3 Within the King's Lynn UAD study area, the Scheduled Monuments comprise the South Gates,<sup>263</sup> three stretches of the medieval town walls to the south-east of the town, including the remains of the North Guanock Gate,<sup>264</sup> and an area of the post-medieval defences of the town surrounding the Red Mount Chapel (Figure 44).<sup>265</sup> The Red Mount Chapel is also scheduled in its own right.<sup>266</sup> Further to the north, the surviving stretch of town wall beside Wyatt Street is scheduled,<sup>267</sup> as is the corresponding and well-preserved stretch of wall adjacent to Kettlewell Lane,<sup>268</sup> and lying between these two stretches of wall, the Littleport Street Bridge is also designated.<sup>269</sup> The Scheduled Monuments within the town comprise the Greyfriars Tower, although the wider footprint of the Greyfriars's site is not included within the scheduled area,<sup>270</sup> and, likewise, the Whitefriar's Gateway in South Lynn is also scheduled, although again the wider area of the monastic precinct is not.<sup>271</sup> As is apparent, most of the Scheduled Monuments pertain to parts of the town's medieval and post-medieval defences, although many former elements of these schemes, such as the location of the former Civil War fortifications to the north-east of the town, are not included within these scheduled areas. The inclusion of these additional defensive features within the King's Lynn UAD affords them an additional level of recognition and protection, by ensuring that they are considered when decisions affecting the town's historic environment are made.
- 5.2.4 Under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act (1953),<sup>272</sup> Historic England compiles a register of 'gardens and other land' situated in England that appear to be of special historic interest. The area of The Walks, which has its origins in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century landscaping of the ground between the eastern edge of the town centre and the medieval defences, was designated as a Grade II Registered Park and Garden in 1998 (Figure 45).<sup>273</sup>

---

<sup>262</sup> Historic England 2017.

<sup>263</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1003699: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1003699>

<sup>264</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1003700: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1003700>

<sup>265</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1003696: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1003696>

<sup>266</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1003691: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1003691>

<sup>267</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1003695: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1003695>

<sup>268</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1003692: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1003692>

<sup>269</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1003697: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1003697>

<sup>270</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1003701: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1003701>

<sup>271</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1003693: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1003693>

<sup>272</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/1-2/49/contents>

<sup>273</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1001374: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001374>



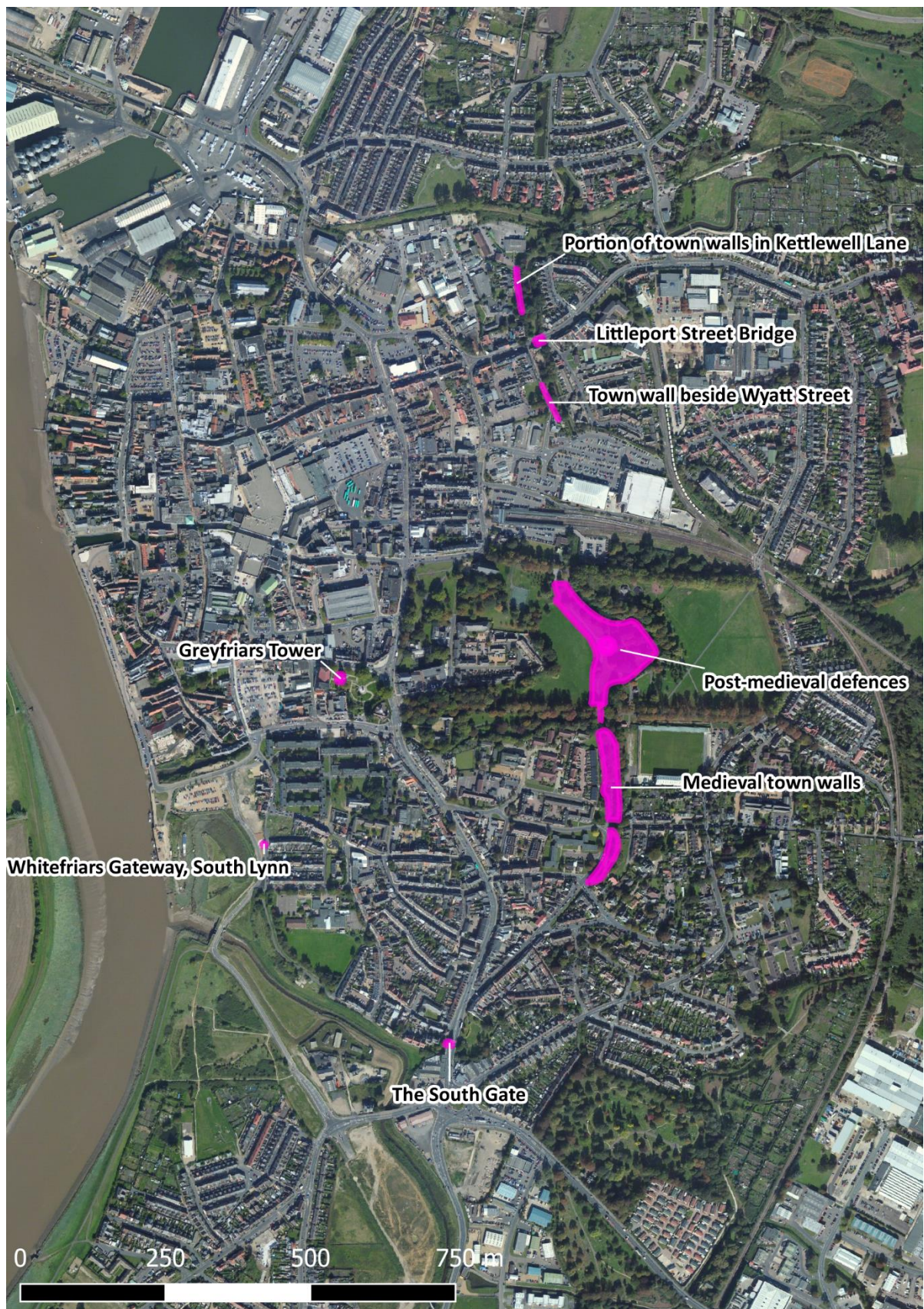


Figure 44. Scheduled Monuments within the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:10,000. (Scheduled Monument data © Historic England; Contains ESRI World Imagery (Clarity) Beta data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/1606/>)





Figure 45. Registered Parks and Gardens within the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:10,000. (Parks and Gardens data © Historic England; Contains ESRI World Imagery (Clarity) Beta data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/1606/>)



Laid out in 1713, with significant further phases of expansion and planting taking place throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, The Walks represents one of the earliest surviving Town Walks in the country. As well as encompassing the open grounds and landscaped features of The Walks itself, this area also incorporates several of the Scheduled Monuments pertaining to the former town defences and the Red Mount Chapel. Unlike Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings, a Registered Park or Garden is not protected by a separate planning consent regime, but applications for planning permission will give great weight to their conservation. As with Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens also have a setting which may contribute to their significance and this setting can also be affected positively or negatively by development.<sup>274</sup>

- 5.2.5 Legislation pertaining to buildings and areas of special architectural and historic interest is contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.<sup>275</sup> Under the act, historic buildings can be designated at one of three grades: Grade I, defined as buildings of exceptional interest (2.5% nationally); Grade II\*, important buildings of more than special interest (5.8%); and Grade II, buildings of special interest (91.7%). With regard to heritage management, these designations mean that listed building consent must be applied for in order to make any changes which might affect the special interest of the building. Decisions affecting Grade II buildings are made by the Borough Council, while decisions affecting Grade II\* and Grade I buildings are made with additional input from Historic England. Again, each Listed Building also has a setting which may contribute to its significance and this setting can also be affected positively or negatively by development.<sup>276</sup>
- 5.2.6 The King's Lynn UAD area contains 322 listed building records, many of which pertain to more than one building, meaning that the total number of listed buildings is higher. Of these records, 13 (4.1%) pertain to Grade I listed buildings, 41 (12.7%) are Grade II\* listed buildings and 268 (83.2%) are Grade II listed, meaning that the higher grades are over-represented when compared against the national average. As can be seen in Figure 46, within the UAD area there are a few examples of outlying listed buildings, most of them listed at Grade II, which stand within the historic cores of the settlements surrounding the town, such as North and South Wootton, West Lynn and Gaywood. As can also be seen, the vast majority of the listed buildings are clustered densely within the historic core of the town itself (Figure 47).

---

<sup>274</sup> Historic England 2017.

<sup>275</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>

<sup>276</sup> Historic England 2017.





Figure 46. Listed Buildings within the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:50,000. (Listed Building data © Historic England; Contains ESRI World Imagery (Clarity) Beta data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/1606/>)





Figure 47. Detailed view of Listed Buildings within the historic core of King's Lynn. Scale 1:10,000. (Listed Building data © Historic England; Contains ESRI World Imagery (Clarity) Beta data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/1606/>)



- 5.2.7 As might be expected, many of the Grade I buildings are located within the heart of the original town, and include St Margaret's church,<sup>277</sup> the Guildhall,<sup>278</sup> the Greyfriars Tower,<sup>279</sup> Hanse House,<sup>280</sup> Hampton Court,<sup>281</sup> Thoresby College,<sup>282</sup> and Clifton House.<sup>283</sup> Within the wider town, other Grade I buildings include the Red Mount Chapel,<sup>284</sup> the Customs House,<sup>285</sup> 28, 30 and 32 King Street,<sup>286</sup> the Guildhall of St George,<sup>287</sup> St Nicholas's Chapel,<sup>288</sup> and the South Gate.<sup>289</sup> The Grade II\* buildings are more widely distributed across the town centre and include All Saints' Church in South Lynn,<sup>290</sup> the Greenland Fishery House,<sup>291</sup> the gateway to the Carmelite precinct,<sup>292</sup> the North Guanock Gate,<sup>293</sup> and lengths of the town wall at Littleport Terrace<sup>294</sup> and Kettlewell Lane.<sup>295</sup> There is also a high concentration of Grade II\*-listed buildings along the western sides of Queen Street, King Street and Nelson Street, and fronting onto the Tuesday Market, which reflect the westward movement of the riverside and the rebuilding of the town's housing stock in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The vast majority of the remaining buildings which front onto the streets within the historic core of the town are designated at Grade II, reflecting the rich heritage of the town's building stock.
- 5.2.8 Conservation Areas are also governed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.<sup>296</sup> The designation of a Conservation Area recognises its unique qualities, such as the contribution of individual buildings and monuments, topography, materials, spatial relationships, thoroughfares, street furniture, open spaces, views, and landscaping. All of these factors, and others, contribute to the character and appearance of an area, resulting in a distinctive local identity.

---

<sup>277</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1211336: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1211336>

<sup>278</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1211953: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1211953>

<sup>279</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1195428: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1195428>

<sup>280</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1195393: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1195393>

<sup>281</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1195430: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1195430>

<sup>282</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1195418: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1195418>

<sup>283</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1210377: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1210377>

<sup>284</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1195403: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1195403>

<sup>285</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1195414: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1195414>

<sup>286</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1195291: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1195291>

<sup>287</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1290960: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1290960>

<sup>288</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1210545: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1210545>

<sup>289</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1195304: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1195304>

<sup>290</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1195345: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1195345>

<sup>291</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1219470: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1219470>

<sup>292</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1212056: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1212056>

<sup>293</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1219520: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1219520>

<sup>294</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1220776: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1220776>

<sup>295</sup> NHLE Entry No. 1298197: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1298197>

<sup>296</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>





Figure 48. Detailed view of the Conservation Area within the historic core of King's Lynn, together with Listed Buildings. Scale 1:10,000. (Contains ESRI World Imagery (Clarity) Beta data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/1606/>)



- 5.2.9 The King's Lynn Conservation Area was first designated in 1969 and in its original incarnation was confined to the streets surrounding St Nicholas's chapel and the Tuesday Market and those surrounding St Margaret's church and the Saturday Market, the two areas being linked by King Street and Queen Street. In 1978, the character of the historic core of King's Lynn was reappraised, resulting in the defining of a new, enlarged conservation area, which was adopted by the Borough Council in March 1979. In 1991, a minor extension was made to the boundary in Stonegate Street, but otherwise the Conservation Area retains its 1979 boundary. As can be seen in Figure 48, the Conservation Area does not cover the entirety of the historic core of the town, and many areas of modern development have been excluded. These include the Vancouver Centre and bus station, which sit at the heart of the town, as well as substantial areas of modern development in South Lynn. The Conservation Area was reviewed again in 2003, at which point it was decided that the existing single, large Conservation Area did not adequately reflect the complex history and pattern of growth in evidence in the physical make-up of the town centre. As a result, the Conservation Area was sub-divided into five new Conservation Areas, focussing on the main historic periods of development. Character Statements were written for each area to highlight the special qualities which underpin the character of the Conservation Area. These were approved by the Borough Council in 2003 and fully revised in November 2008.<sup>297</sup>
- 5.2.10 The 'St Margaret's Area' focusses on the historic core of the town, comprising St Margaret's church and the Saturday Market, together with St Margaret's Place, Nelson Street and Queen Street. This area also encompasses much of the land to the east, including St James's Street, the former Greyfriars site and the library, and extends northwards along the High Street to the southern bank of the Purfleet. The Vancouver Centre and the St James's multi-storey car park are excluded from the area. Effectively, this area corresponds to the known focus of the original Bishop's Lynn, situated between the Millfleet and the Purfleet, and encompasses much of the reclaimed medieval waterfront.<sup>298</sup>
- 5.2.11 To the north of the 'St Margaret's Area', the 'St Nicholas's Area' focusses on the Newland, being the land extending north of the Purfleet to the southern edge of the Port of King's Lynn complex and incorporating the streets around St Nicholas's chapel. The eastern edge of this area follows the line of Chapel Street, and the focal point of the area is the Tuesday Market and King Street and High Street which feed into it. To the west, this area

---

<sup>297</sup> [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20081/conservation\\_and\\_listed\\_buildings/139/conservation\\_areas](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20081/conservation_and_listed_buildings/139/conservation_areas)

<sup>298</sup> [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1912/kings\\_lynn\\_st\\_margarets\\_con\\_area\\_leafletpdf.pdf](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1912/kings_lynn_st_margarets_con_area_leafletpdf.pdf)

incorporates the Common Staithe and the reclaimed waterfront, on which stand numerous linear warehouse complexes.<sup>299</sup>

- 5.2.12 To the east of the 'St Nicholas's Area', the 'Norfolk Street Area' focusses on the line of Norfolk Street and Littleport Street, wrapping around the eastern side of the Vancouver Centre and the bus station to encompass Railway Road and the approaches to the train station, which is also included. This area also includes the extant stretches of the town wall adjacent to Kettlewell Lane and Wyatt Street, although much of the modern development surrounding these features is excluded from the area.<sup>300</sup>
- 5.2.13 To the south of the 'Norfolk Street Area' and east of the 'St Margaret's Area', the 'Walks Area' focusses on the area of open ground between the town and the walls that was originally landscaped in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and much developed since. At the western edge of the area are buildings focussing around the former St James's chapel, while the central part of the area is occupied by the line of the former town defences and later Civil War defences, together with the Red Mount Chapel. Modern development to the south of the Millfleet is excluded from this area, as is the football ground, but the boundary of the area does extend southwards in a thin tongue of land to encompass the line of the former town walls.<sup>301</sup>
- 5.2.14 Finally, to the south of the 'St Margaret's Area', the 'Friars' Area' includes much of the area of South Lynn between the Millfleet and the South Gate. This area encompasses much of the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century development which grew up following the construction of London Road and includes All Saints' church, although the area of the Hillington Square estate which surrounds the church is excluded. Likewise, much of the modern development to the east of London Road and north of Windsor Road is excluded. The area takes its name from the former Carmelite friary, which stood on the riverside, part of the former extent of which is included within the area, although the Whitefriars Primary School is also excluded.<sup>302</sup>
- 5.2.15 The historic environment of King's Lynn is clearly well served by the existing group of Conservation Areas, which take a thorough approach to the built form and visual

---

<sup>299</sup> [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1909/kings\\_lynn\\_st\\_nicholas\\_con\\_area\\_leafletpdf.pdf](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1909/kings_lynn_st_nicholas_con_area_leafletpdf.pdf)

<sup>300</sup> [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1922/kings\\_lynn\\_norfolk\\_street\\_con\\_area\\_leafletpdf.pdf](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1922/kings_lynn_norfolk_street_con_area_leafletpdf.pdf)

<sup>301</sup> [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1911/kings\\_lynn\\_the\\_walks\\_con\\_area\\_leafletpdf.pdf](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1911/kings_lynn_the_walks_con_area_leafletpdf.pdf)

<sup>302</sup> [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1913/kings\\_lynn\\_the\\_friars\\_con\\_area\\_leafletpdf.pdf](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1913/kings_lynn_the_friars_con_area_leafletpdf.pdf)



appearance of the different character areas of the town. The Character Assessments for each area provide a detailed summary of individual Listed Buildings and also, crucially, important unlisted buildings, and take a street-by-street approach to defining the subtleties of the town's historic character. The fact that these Character Assessments are still in active use after 15 years is a strong indication of their quality and continued applicability.. However, the rationale which underpins the existing Character Assessments and, indeed, the approach taken to Conservation Areas more widely, is that they are primarily focussed upon the visual elements of the built environment and their physical setting. As such, the Character Assessments consider the above-ground elements of the historic environment and, although each of the Character Statements contains a section on 'Archaeological Interest', these statements are very brief and are generally limited to Scheduled Monuments and a cursory overview of major finds. These brief archaeological statements have also not been updated since these texts were last reviewed in 2008.

- 5.2.16 Finally, in addition to the various classes of designated heritage assets discussed above, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF,) which governs the planning process, also recognises the existence of non-designated heritage assets.<sup>303</sup> Non-designated heritage assets are defined as buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.<sup>304</sup> Many of the records contained within the King's Lynn UAD therefore constitute non-designated heritage assets, be they archaeological or architectural in character, and as such under the terms of the NPPF they are given a level of protection when assessing the potential impact of development proposals. Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that 'the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset'.<sup>305</sup> In addition, a footnote to paragraph 200 of the NPPF makes it clear that 'non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets'.<sup>306</sup> As has been set out above, the King's Lynn UAD has been specifically created to address the

---

<sup>303</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> (as at July 2021)

<sup>304</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>

<sup>305</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> (as at July 2021)

<sup>306</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> (as at July 2021)

need for a more comprehensive understanding of the buried archaeological resource within the town and its hinterland in order to ensure that archaeological concerns are addressed and managed through the planning process. In order to address this need more fully, the final section of this report sets out a series of archaeological character areas which help to categorize in general terms the archaeological potential of the UAD area and presents an overview of archaeological processes with which development within the UAD area should comply.

### 5.3 Archaeological Character Areas

- 5.3.1 King's Lynn grew up on the eastern bank of the River Ouse, at its confluence with the Gaywood River, the Nar and lesser streams, which drained into it from the higher ground to the east. The spot provided a safe haven for those navigating into the estuary from the Wash, where cargo could be loaded and unloaded and fresh water obtained. The site was likewise the last safe-haven for those navigating downriver to the sea. The King's Lynn UAD covers an area of 26.5 km<sup>2</sup> and encompasses the historic core of the town, as well as a substantial area of the town's hinterland, within which there are considerable differences in topography and underlying geology. As such, the archaeological character of the UAD area exhibits considerable variation, however it is possible to broadly characterise the archaeological record of different parts of the UAD area in order to better understand its archaeological potential.
- 5.3.2 In broad terms, the historic core of King's Lynn, specifically that area enclosed by the medieval and later town defences, is classified as being of an 'urban' archaeological character (Figures 49 and 50). This comprises a high density of rich and diverse medieval and post-medieval deposits, structures, objects and environmental evidence that are related to the dynamic and changing urban experience, and to the broader role of urban centres in economy, society and culture.<sup>307</sup> Given the density and longevity of the occupation of the town, surviving archaeological deposits are likely to be deeply stratified and complex to excavate and interpret, with a high potential for archaeological sequences to be affected by human factors such as the construction and demolition of later structures, particularly those with cellars, and natural factors, such as erosion, inundation or flooding. As is discussed further below, the urban area of the town can be subdivided into smaller archaeological character areas following an approach similar to that adopted with regard to the definition of the Conservation Areas. The nature and research potential of urban archaeological

---

<sup>307</sup> Antrobus and Ayers 2021.

deposits in the eastern region has recently been considered in a Resource Assessment produced as part of the revision of the Regional Research Framework<sup>308</sup> and a number of specific research questions pertaining to the region's urban archaeological sites, including King's Lynn, have been identified in the accompanying Research Agenda.<sup>309</sup>

- 5.3.3 The town of King's Lynn is often described as comprising three parts, each representing a different phase of its historical development, and, as has been seen, this is reflected in both the historic sources which have survived from the earliest periods of its history and in the archaeological record of the town. This tripartite division also underpins the definition of the town's Conservation Areas, discussed above, and is similarly reflected in the archaeological character of the town centre (Figure 50). The oldest part of the town lies in the area of what is now known as South Lynn, and effectively comprises the land south of the Millfleet enclosed by the later defences of the town, and these are used to define the 'South Lynn' archaeological character area. This area apparently originated as an island occupied by salt-panners situated on the coast of the Wash and the parish church of South Lynn was founded in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, although the South Lynn area did not formally become a part of the Borough until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. As a consequence, the underlying archaeological character of South Lynn should reflect the essentially rural nature of the original settlement, which was apparently not founded long before the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Evidence for Late Saxon salt-working and settlement might be expected to be found in the vicinity of All Saints' church, although the immediate environs of the church are now dominated by the Hillington Square estate. Following the formal foundation of the town to the north, the South Lynn area apparently remained relatively undeveloped for much of the medieval period, with the exception of medieval buildings fronting onto what is now Bridge Street and All Saints' Street, and the only major medieval development within the area was the establishment of the Carmelite friary adjacent to the river. The boundary of the friary precinct is relatively well understood and the archaeological potential of the undeveloped areas of the site remains high. However, the overall archaeological character of the South Lynn is compromised by the fact that the historic core of the town expanded dramatically into South Lynn in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century following the construction of London Road. As a consequence, much of the area, including the immediate setting of the church and the site of the friary, have been subject to intensive development for the last 200 years, and this will have had a dramatic impact upon

---

<sup>308</sup> Antrobus and Ayers 2021: <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/resource-assessments/medieval-urban/>

<sup>309</sup> <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/research-agenda/medieval-urban/>



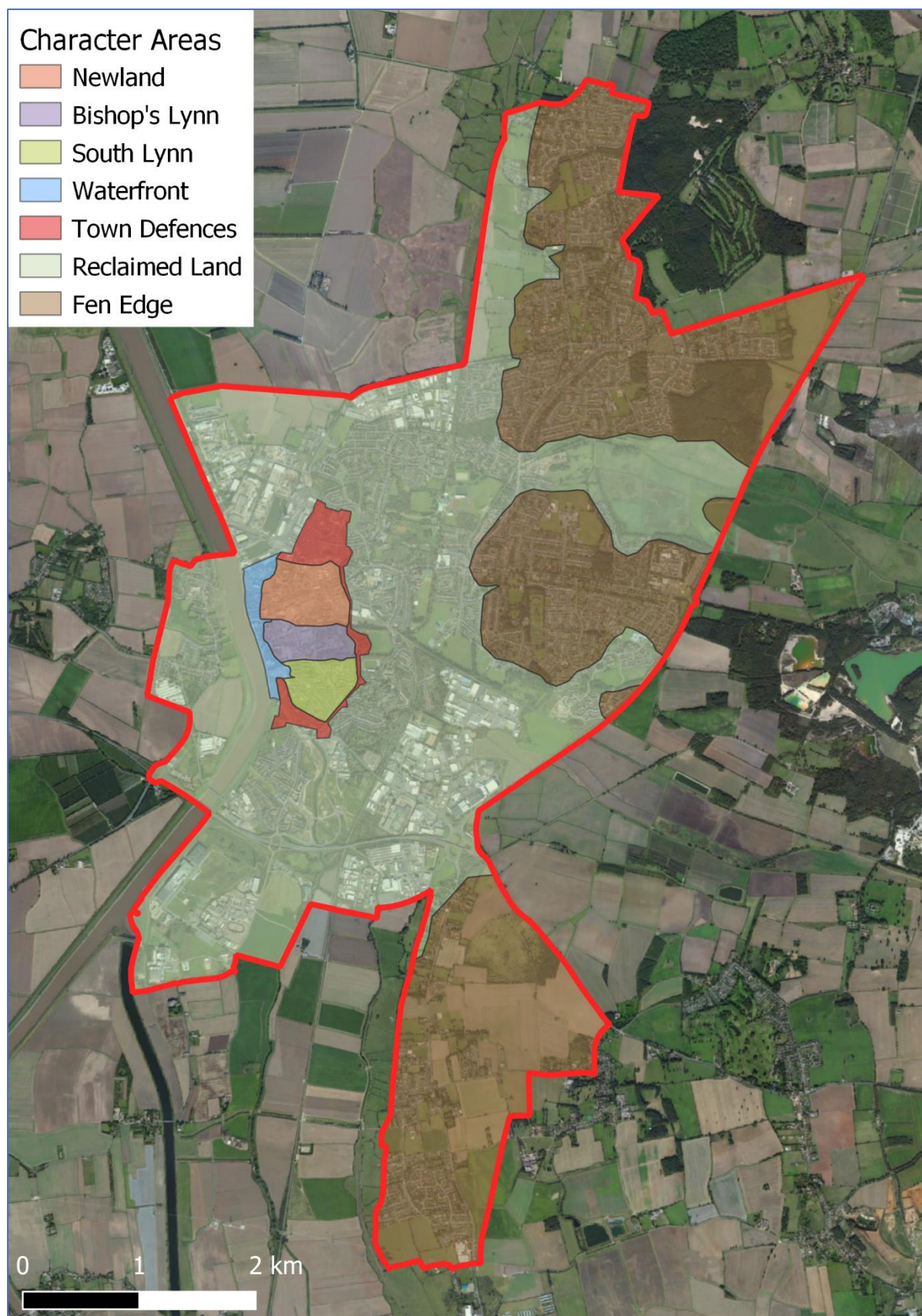


Figure 49. Archaeological Character Areas within the King's Lynn UAD area. Scale 1:50,000. (Contains ESRI World Imagery (Clarity) Beta data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/1606/>)



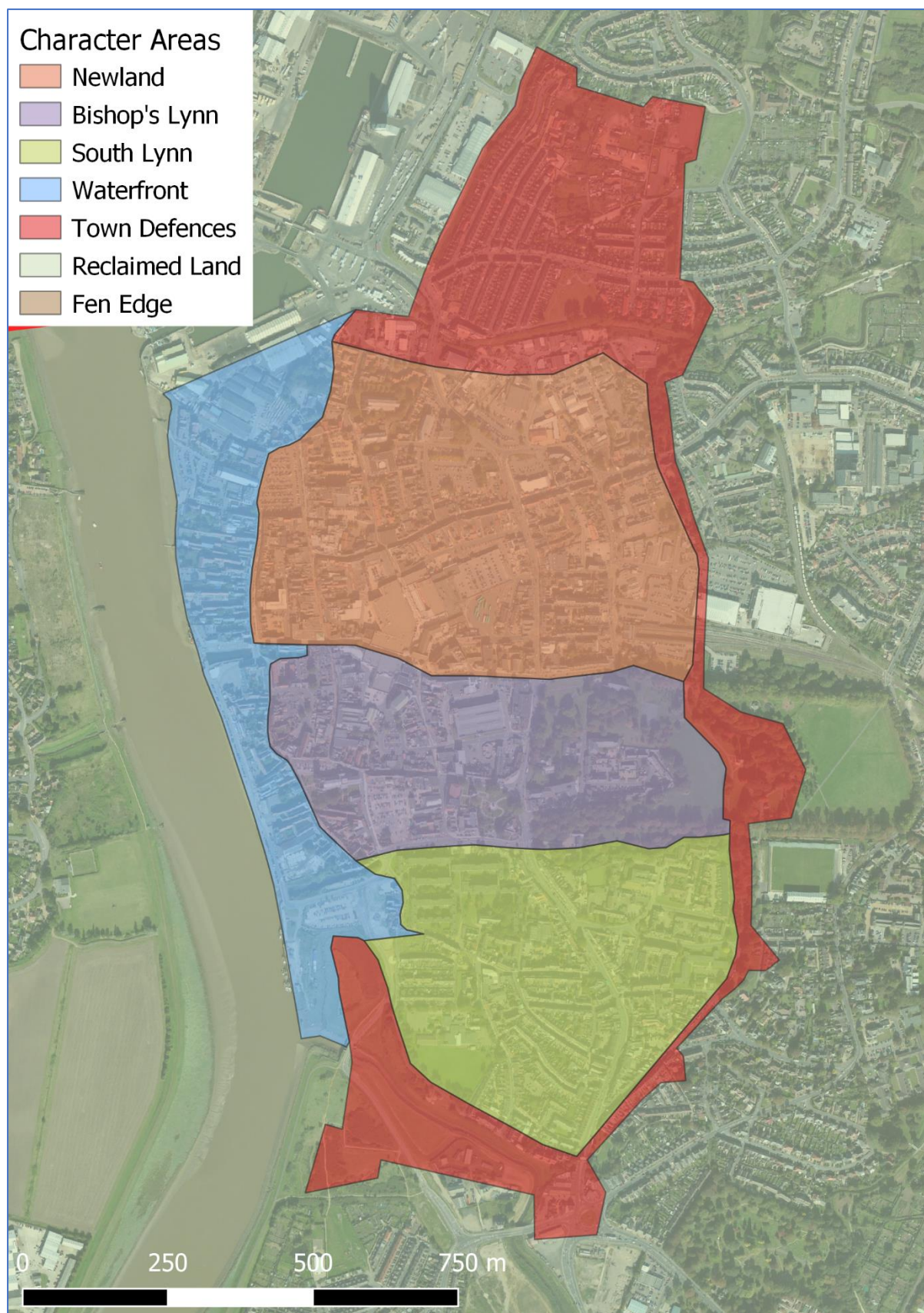


Figure 50. Detailed view of Archaeological Character Areas within the historic core of King's Lynn. Scale 1:10,000. (Contains ESRI World Imagery (Clarity) Beta data: <https://qms.nextgis.com/geoservices/1606/>)

the survival and integrity of any underlying archaeological deposits. That said, the archaeological potential of the parcels of land within South Lynn which have remained relatively undeveloped is considered to be high.

- 5.3.4 The second major phase of the town's development is ascribed to 1090, when Herbert de Losinga, then still the Bishop of Thetford, founded the church of St Margaret, along with a priory and tied market. Following the establishment of St Margaret's, a chapel dedicated to St James was founded to some distance to the east of the church. The line between St Margaret's church and St James's chapel formed a major west–east axis of the original town, along which the built-up area of the town developed, together with the main south–north axis, which ran through South Lynn and crossed Bishop's Lynn between the Millfleet and the Purfleet. The two watercourses demarcated the extent of the original town, and they are also used to define the 'Bishop's Lynn' archaeological character area, the western boundary of which is marked by the line of Nelson Street and Queen Street (Figure 50).
- 5.3.5 As was set out above, surprisingly little archaeological investigation has been undertaken within the area of the original core of Bishop's Lynn. This is primarily a reflection of the extent to which the area is dominated by St Margaret's church, the precinct of its attendant priory and the Saturday Market place, the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Guildhall to their north and the site of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Franciscan Friary to their east. The historical extents of the priory and friary precincts are well understood and both are of high archaeological potential, although both have been subject to later development which will have impacted upon any surviving archaeological deposits. Archaeological excavations of the land lying between St Margaret's and St James's chapel, have indicated the potential for 12<sup>th</sup>- or 13<sup>th</sup>-century timber structures and property boundaries to survive, despite later development, which had only partially truncated the underlying deposits. Likewise, at the northern edge of the original town, fronting onto the Purfleet, the KLAS undertook a series of excavations between Baker Lane and the riverside which revealed multiple phases of settlement evidence dating from the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century onwards, which included a late-14<sup>th</sup>-century stone warehouse and later hall complex. The site was sparsely occupied during the post-medieval period, and became the site of a brewery in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. These discoveries all serve to indicate that although the area of the original town was subject to relatively early redevelopment during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, in many cases this involved the remodelling of existing buildings rather than their wholesale replacement, resulting in the preservation of archaeological deposits dating from the historically documented period of the town's origins. Previous archaeological fieldwork in King's Lynn suggests that any excavation within the historic core



of the town has the potential to reveal well-preserved organic material due to waterlogging, with finds and features likely to include wooden structures, wattle fences, wooden posts, nails and spoons, as well as bone, leather and textiles. The preservation of organic residues and plant and animal remains, which reveal information about the contemporary landscape, is also very good. As a consequence, in addition to the very high sensitivity of the built historic environment of this area highlighted in the Conservation Area Character Assessment, the archaeological potential of the area of the historic core of the town is very high.

- 5.3.6 Within 60 years of the foundation of St Margaret's church, under the auspices of William de Turbe, the Bishop of Norwich, the town expanded into the area north of the Purfleet. It seems that bridges across the Purfleet already existed by this date, and a hospital of St John the Baptist had also already been founded within the area of the Newland around 1135. Towards the northern edge of the Newland, Turbe founded St Nicholas's Chapel in 1146 as a chapel of ease for St Margaret's church. To its south-west, the Tuesday Market was established, perhaps based on an earlier market, and in its first incarnation the site was only developed on its southern and eastern sides, with its northern and western extents being bordered by the banks of the river. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a Dominican Friary (Blackfriars) was founded on the site now occupied by the bus station, King's Lynn Museum and the area between Old Market Street and Blackfriars Street. An Augustinian Friary was founded to the east of the Tuesday Market place, on the site now occupied by the Borough Council offices at King's Court. The Newland grew rapidly, and a comprehensive picture of its late 13<sup>th</sup>-century layout can be reconstructed from details contained within the 'Newelond Survey', a rental dating from c.1279 compiled for the Bishop of Norwich. The 'Newland' archaeological character area is defined by the Purfleet and the line of the town defences, and its western boundary is marked by the line of King Street (Figure 50).
- 5.3.7 As with the other monastic precincts in the town, we can be reasonably certain of the locations and extents of the Dominican and Augustinian friaries, the sites of which have both been heavily redeveloped since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although their archaeological potential remains high. Many of the excavations undertaken by the KLAS were located within the Newland, including excavations south of Surrey Street, to the south-east of the Tuesday Market, which revealed that the site was first settled in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and that the property boundaries established at that date remained largely unchanged until the 1960s. An extensive campaign of archaeological work was undertaken as part of the redevelopment of the Vancouver Shopping Centre, revealing little evidence for occupation

of the Newland during the 11<sup>th</sup> or early 12<sup>th</sup> centuries and suggesting that during this period the area was open, undeveloped and contained natural channels. The same excavations indicated that there was no evidence for any large-scale or systematic reclamation of the area during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, rather that there was a gradual accretion of material through dumping and natural processes, with the focus of occupation being to the west, along the river frontages, rather than further inland. These excavations are complemented by the results of an archaeological borehole survey of the Chapel Street Car Park, which confirmed the historical accounts of the development of the Newland, with organic waterlogged medieval occupation deposits identified at c.1–2m below ground level, beneath thick deposits of make-up and demolition rubble. Radiocarbon dating combined with artefactual evidence suggests occupation occurred from the 11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries on marshy ground marginal to the main core of the settlement. Like the original core of the town, the Newland was subject to extensive redevelopment during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, although archaeological excavations have demonstrated that in many cases the renovation of existing buildings and the construction of new ones has not had a significant effect upon the underlying archaeological deposits. This is ably demonstrated by the fact that surviving medieval deposits, many of them waterlogged, were discovered during excavations conducted within the existing branch of Marks and Spencer. The archaeological potential of the Newland area to contain archaeological features and deposits dating from the medieval period onwards is therefore considered to be high.

- 5.3.8 Historical sources indicate that King's Lynn was first fortified in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when the town was surrounded by an earthwork and a ditch. The medieval defences of the town encircled the entire settlement, including the area of South Lynn, the historic core of Bishop's Lynn between the Millfleet and the Purfleet, and the Newland. The former course of the defences is relatively easily to trace due to the fact that many of the streets which followed the line of the defences have survived, together with many stretches of walling, earthworks and gatehouses, and by the survival of several stretches of wet ditch on their eastward side. These features define 'The Town Defences' archaeological character area, which also incorporates the later augmentation of the defences during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and many features pertaining to the defences are the subject of the heritage designations discussed in the previous section (Figure 50).
- 5.3.9 The town defences were strengthened in the 16<sup>th</sup> century following Henry VIII's takeover of the control of the town from the bishop. In 1570, the threat of invasion prompted the construction of a small fort, known as St Anne's Fort, at the northern end of the town. When

the Civil War broke out the town declared for Parliament and the town's defences were augmented. In late 1643, a coup installed the royalist Sir Hamon L'Estrange as the governor of the town and the town's Members of Parliament were arrested. Having shut the town's gates to Parliament, work began again on the town's defences and houses which might have obstructed them were apparently pulled down. In response, Parliament set up a land- and sea-based blockade of the town and the town was besieged from 28 August 1645.

Ultimately, a major assault on the town was threatened and the town surrendered on 16 September 1643. King's Lynn became the principal logistical centre for the Parliamentary Army of the Eastern Association, and the Parliamentarians set about augmenting the existing defences of the town with new fortifications to the north and south of the town, which transformed it into what has been described as the strongest fortress in East Anglia. The extent and character of these defences was illustrated by Hollar in 1660 and by Bell in 1680, while later maps indicate that many elements of the Civil War defences were removed during the course of the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Very little evidence for King's Lynn's Civil War defences survives above ground today, barring some slight earthworks and water-filled ditches, but fieldwork undertaken by the King's Lynn Under Siege project to the north-east of the town revealed significant evidence for the defences surviving within the now-suburban landscape to the west of Raby Avenue. Despite the later alterations and demolitions which have occurred along the line of the town's defences, it is considered that enough structures still survive to demonstrate the heritage significance of the defective scheme and the archaeological potential of those stretches which have subsequently been removed remains high.

- 5.3.10 To the west of the historic core of the town lies the river, which was the principal reason for King's Lynn's foundation, and Lynn's situation at the head of a network of rivers which penetrated deep into the heart of mainland England was the key to its economic success as a port and transshipment centre. As might be expected, this economic focus on riverine and sea-borne trade had the greatest impact upon the western side of the town, where evidence for a continuous sequence of reclamation and redevelopment spanning the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the present day has been recovered. At its foundation, the riverside edge of the town was defined by the lines of Nelson Street and Queen Street, together with King Street and the Tuesday Market as the town extended northwards, but during the course of the medieval period, the edge of the town gradually crept westwards as the river edge was slowly reclaimed by the dumping of waste material off the quaysides. We are able to reconstruct the western extent of the original core of the town with a reasonable degree of certainty.



This reclaimed land between the original edge of the town and the current riverside is defined as the 'Waterfront' archaeological character area (Figure 50).

- 5.3.11 The archaeological potential of this reclaimed area is very high, as is clearly illustrated by excavated evidence obtained from the courtyard of Thoresby College, where the KLAS revealed a medieval timber wharf dating from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century preserved beneath later dumping deposits and buildings, and other sites excavated along the river frontage. In many instances, these deposits are waterlogged, which enables the preservation of timber structures such as quays and wharves, as well as organic artefacts and environmental indicators, such as pollen and plant macrofossils. Further to the north, a borehole survey of the Common Staithe indicating the utilisation of the foreshore and dumping of rubbish during the late 12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries, prior to the major ground-raising and reclamation by the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which serves to remind us that the reclamation of the waterfront was a phased process which arguably culminated in the creation of the Bentinck and Alexandra Docks in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The archaeological potential of the waterfront area to contain archaeological features and deposits dating from the medieval period onwards, many of which are likely to be waterlogged and exceptionally well preserved, is therefore considered to be very high.
- 5.3.12 The extent to which King's Lynn has expanded beyond the medieval town walls is reflected in the boundary of the UAD area, which encompasses the rural hinterland of the town and now contains many of the town's outlying industrial estates and retail parks. In many cases, these have also been subject to archaeological fieldwork prior to or during their construction, from which can be inferred something of the wider landscape context of the town itself and the manner in which it has expanded over time. The urban character of the historic core of the town contrasts with the wider hinterland contained within the UAD area, which can be broadly classified as being of a 'rural' archaeological character. This comprises a much lower density of past occupation, often dating from a single period or group of periods, with very few intercutting features spread over a larger area. This often results in simpler stratigraphic sequences, which are easier to excavate and interpret. The likelihood of disturbance or truncation caused by later occupation is also lower, although factors such as the later cultivation of open agricultural land potentially have a much greater impact on archaeological deposits. Rural archaeology of this kind is also more suitable for detection via aerial survey, appearing as cropmarks or earthworks, and artefacts recovered as a result of metal-detecting, systematic fieldwalking or as stray finds can offer an insight into the character and extent of any underlying archaeological features.

5.3.13 The archaeological data contained within the UAD indicate that there was very little in the way of human occupation which significantly pre-dates the foundation of the town itself. Given what we know about the geographic development of the Wash and the Fenland, this is not so surprising, as the prevailing environmental conditions did not lend themselves to permanent occupation of the land on which the town stands until the Late Anglo-Saxon period. As such, prehistoric material from the parish is limited to the discovery, most often as stray finds, of worked flint implements ranging in date from the Palaeolithic period to the Bronze Age, and from the Bronze Age to the Roman period by pottery, metalwork and archaeological features. Such material predominantly lies on the west-facing slopes as the ground rises away from the floodplains of the Gaywood valley and the Wash basin. Bronze Age occupation is particularly well evidenced in the north-eastern corner of the UAD area, where a Bronze Age barrow and broadly contemporaneous settlement lay in the vicinity of Reffley Wood. Very little evidence for Iron Age occupation has been discovered within the UAD area, although Iron Age peat deposits have been identified in low-lying locations, suggesting that the wider area was largely inundated during this period. By contrast, evidence for Roman occupation within the UAD area is much more extensive, but is again constrained to the higher ground of the North Runcton area to the south and North Wootton to the north, with extensive evidence for Roman iron-working having been discovered in both locations. With the exception of a few findspots, the Early and Middle Anglo-Saxon periods are also poorly represented within the UAD area, primarily because the majority of the low-lying land was again inundated during this period, with the major focus of Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon occupation lying further to the east around the now-ruined church at Bawsey.

5.3.14 Based on the distribution of this material, the higher ground to the north-east, east and south-east of the UAD area has been categorised as belonging to the 'Fen Edge' archaeological character area, in which the potential for archaeological deposits, features and/or artefacts from most periods is considered to be high, with certain periods, such as the Bronze Age and the Roman period, being particularly well represented (Figure 48). By contrast, the wider, low-lying landscape of the UAD area is largely devoid of early archaeological remains, with the land only really being drained, reclaimed and exploited as a result of the salt-working industry and following the development of the town. The agricultural usage of the low-lying fenland areas within the rural hinterland of King's Lynn contributed towards its economic prosperity, as well as that of surrounding settlements, and the degree to which this land was cultivated is clearly illustrated by the identification in

aerial photographs of numerous areas of ridge-and-furrow, resulting from cultivation, which survived into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the expansion of the suburbs and industrial estates which surround King's Lynn, much of this landscape is now developed, but archaeological fieldwork has demonstrated the potential for the survival of medieval and, particularly, post-medieval features. As a consequence, this low-lying ground, including the valleys of the Rivers Gaywood and Nar, has been categorised as the 'Reclaimed Land' archaeological character area, which is considered to be of medium archaeological potential (Figure 49).

5.3.15 While archaeological character areas of the kind described here are useful for giving a general indication of the likely archaeological potential of different parts of the King's Lynn UAD area, they only offer a high-level guide and are not a substitute for the detailed heritage assessments produced on site-by-site and scheme-by-scheme bases which are required by the NPPF and by local planning policies. Previous fieldwork has demonstrated that the archaeological sequences of individual sites and areas within the town and its hinterland are highly nuanced. As a consequence, the management of the historic environment in the planning process is not a subject which can be dealt with in a one-size-fits-all manner. Rather, the requirements and specifications for development-led archaeological projects are considered on a case-by-case basis, with specialist advice and guidance provided by Norfolk County Council's Historic Environment Service acting as archaeological advisors to the Borough Council, often working in tandem with the Borough Council's Conservation Officers and specialists from Historic England, as appropriate. Their advice is informed by the data contained within the King's Lynn UAD, which is used to assess the likely archaeological implications of proposed developments prior to a planning application being determined. Existing data may be complemented by additional archaeological evaluation, including desk-based assessments, borehole surveys, geophysical surveys, test-pitting and trial-trenching, being undertaken either pre-determination or through the use of planning conditions. If consent is granted, a programme of archaeological mitigation may be required, and this can involve further desk-based research, archaeological investigations and recording, and/or preservation of archaeological deposits *in situ*. Detailed guidance setting out the archaeological planning process in the county and current standards for development-led archaeological projects was published by Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service in 2018.<sup>310</sup>

---

<sup>310</sup> <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/rubbish-recycling-planning/planning/planning-nd-the-historic-environment/standards-for-development-led-archaeological-projects-in-norfolk.pdf>



5.3.16 Undertaken as part of the five-year King's Lynn Heritage Action Zone initiative (HAZ), the creation of the King's Lynn Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) within the existing framework of the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (HER) has captured and synthesised our knowledge of the buried archaeology and built heritage of the town and its hinterland. As a consequence, the King's Lynn UAD provides a historic environment management tool which informs planning decision-making and supports the delivery of housing and growth within the UAD area. UADs can be used to assess the archaeological potential and importance of proposed development sites in order to inform planning decisions and strategic management of the historic environment, as well as providing an educational and research tool. The existence of the King's Lynn UAD enables more effective responses to threats to the historic environment to be given in a timely manner by local authorities, Historic England and other statutory bodies. Finally, all of the data contained within the King's Lynn UAD has been placed in the public domain via the Norfolk Heritage Explorer website and Historic England's Heritage Gateway website, raising awareness, interest and understanding of King's Lynn's rich past.

## Bibliography

- Albone, J., Massey, S. and Tremlett, S. 2007. *The Archaeology of Norfolk's Coastal Zone*. Historic England Report No. 114/2007. <https://research.historicengland.org.uk/Report.aspx?i=15700>
- Antrobus, A. and Ayers, B. 2021. 'Medieval: Urban - Resource Assessment', *East of England Regional Research Framework*. <https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/resource-assessments/medieval-urban/>
- Atkin M. 1985. 'The Anglo-Saxon urban landscape in East Anglia', *Landscape History* 7, 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01433768.1985.10594387>
- Ayers, B. 2013. 'Cities, Cogs and Commerce: Archaeological Approaches to the Material Culture of the North Sea World' in Bates, D. and Liddiard, R. (eds) *East Anglia and its North Sea World in the Middle Ages*. Woodbridge: Boydell. pp. 63–81.
- Ayers, B. 2016. *The German Ocean: Medieval Europe around the North Sea*. Sheffield: Equinox.
- Bates, S. 1998. 'The Waterfront in King's Lynn – Recent Excavations', *Norfolk Archaeology* 43, pp. 31–61.
- Beloe, E.M. 1895. 'Freebridge Marshland Hundred and the Making of Lynn', *Norfolk Archaeology* XII, 311–34. <https://doi.org/10.5284/1077516>
- Beloe, E.M. 1899. *Our Borough, Our Churches*. King's Lynn: Thew and Son. [https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=sL\\_MO1hel2UC](https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=sL_MO1hel2UC)
- Blomefield, F. 1808. *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*. Vol. 8. London: W. Miller. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/topographical-hist-norfolk/vol8>
- Bradfer-Lawrence, H.L. 1929. 'The Merchants of Lynn' in C. Ingleby (ed.) *A Supplement to Blomefield's Norfolk*. London: Clement Ingleby. pp. 145–203.
- Brown, R. and Hardy, A. 2011. *Archaeology of the Newland: Excavations in King's Lynn, Norfolk 2003–5*. East Anglian Archaeology Report No, 140. Oxford: Oxford Archaeology. [https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/ea/content/cfm?volume\\_id=1262](https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/ea/content/cfm?volume_id=1262)
- Carmichael, K., Kewley, J. and Newsome, S. 2018. *Southgates, King's Lynn, Norfolk: Historic Area Assessment*. Historic England Research Report Series 09-2018. <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/9-2018>

- Carus-Wilson, E. 1963. 'The Medieval Trade of the Ports of the Wash', *Medieval Archaeology* 6–7, pp. 182–201. [https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-769-1/dissemination/pdf/vol06-07/6\\_182\\_201.pdf](https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-769-1/dissemination/pdf/vol06-07/6_182_201.pdf)
- Childs, W.R. 2013. 'East Anglia's Trade in the North Sea World' in Bates, D. and Liddiard, R. (eds) *East Anglia and its North Sea World in the Middle Ages*. Woodbridge: Boydell. pp. 188–203.
- Clarke, G. and Clarke, R. 2018. 'A Tale of Two Salterns: Recent Excavations at Walpole St Peter and Gaywood, King's Lynn', *Norfolk Archaeology* 48, pp. 1–24.
- Clarke, H. 1986. *The Archaeology of Medieval England*. London: Batsford.
- Clarke, H. and Carter, A. 1977. *Excavations in King's Lynn 1963–1970*. London: Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series 7.
- Cornwall Archaeological Unit. 2016. *King's Lynn: Port Heritage Summary*. Truro: Cornwall Archaeological Unit. <https://doi.org/10.5284/1040801>
- Darby, H.C. 1971. *The Domesday Geography of Eastern England*. Third Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Flintham, D. 2021. 'King's Lynn: The Strongest Fortress in East Anglia', *Battlefield* 26, pp. 12–16. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mJN4BonmB0GNMgDY00ieudAj9cFyL8J-/view>
- Green, C. 1961. 'East Anglian Coast-line Levels Since Roman Times', *Antiquity* 35, 21–8. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00035778>
- Hall, D. and Coles, J. 1994. *Fenland Survey*. London: English Heritage. [https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/eh\\_monographs\\_2014/contents.cfm?mono=1089028](https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/eh_monographs_2014/contents.cfm?mono=1089028)
- Hankinson, S. 2005. 'The Growth of King's Lynn' in Ashwin, T. and Davison, A. (eds) *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk*. Chichester: Phillimore. pp. 80–1.
- Hardy, A. and Brown, R. 2011. Archaeology of the Newland: Excavations in King's Lynn, Norfolk. East Anglian Archaeology Report 140. <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/issue.xhtml?recordId=1140638>
- Hardy, A. Santana, J.N. and Wilkinson, D. 2010. 'Archaeological Investigations of the Red Mount Chapel and The Walks, King's Lynn, 2006–7', *Norfolk Archaeology* 46, pp. 29–47.



- Harper-Bill, C. 2004. 'Losinga, Herbert de', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 18 Mary 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/17025>
- Higgins, D. 2001. *The Antiquities of King's Lynn from the Sketchbooks of the Rev. Edward Edwards*. King's Lynn: Phoenix Publications.
- Higgins, D. 2008. *The Remaking of King's Lynn: Brown Brick and Rounded Corners*. King's Lynn: Phoenix Publications.
- Hillen, H.J. 1907. *History of the Borough of King's Lynn*. 2 vols. Norwich: East of England Newspaper Company Ltd. <https://archive.org/details/historyofborough01hill>
- Historic England. 2017. *The Setting of Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)*. London: Historic England. <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/>
- Hoskins, W.G. 1984. *Local History in England*. Third Edition. London.
- Hutcheson, A.R.J. 2006. 'The Origins of King's Lynn? Control of Wealth on the Wash Prior to the Norman Conquest', *Medieval Archaeology* 50, 71–104. <https://doi.org/10.1179/174581706x124220>
- Ingleby, C. 1929. *A Supplement to Blomefield's Norfolk*. London: At the Sign of the Boar's Head.
- Ingleby, H. 1924. *The Treasures of Lynn*. London: Clement Ingleby.
- Jansen, V. 2008. 'Trading Places: Counting Houses and the Hanseatic 'Steelyard' in King's Lynn' in McNeill, J. (ed.) *King's Lynn and the Fens: Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology*. Leeds: British Archaeological Association. pp. 66–82.
- Kent, P. 1988. *Fortifications of East Anglia*. Lavenham: Terrance Dalton Limited.
- Kewley, J. *The Common Staithe, King's Lynn, Norfolk: An Architectural and Archaeological Assessment*. Historic England Research Report Series 08-2018. <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/8-2018>
- King's Lynn Preservation Trust. 2018. *Saving the Past for the Future*. [https://www.klprestrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/KLPT\\_Brochure\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.klprestrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/KLPT_Brochure_WEB.pdf)
- Mackerell, B. 1738. *The History and Antiquities of the Flourishing Corporation of King's Lynn in the County of Norfolk*. London: E. Cave. <https://archive.org/details/historyandantiq00mackgoog>
- Mottram, A.S. 1968. 'King's Lynn Archaeological Survey', *The Local Historian* Vol. 8 No. 4, pp. 139–45. <https://www.balh.org.uk/publication-tlh-the-local-historian-volume-8-number-4-november-1968>

- Murphy, P. 2005. 'Coastal Change and Human Response' in Ashwin, T. and Davison, A. (eds) *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk*. Chichester: Phillimore. pp. 6–7.
- Newsome, S. 2018. *Chapel Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk: The History and Archaeology of the Chapel Street Car Park*. Historic England Research Report Series 02-2018.  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/2-2018>
- Oosthuizen, S. 2017. *The Anglo-Saxon Fenland*. Oxford: Windgather Press.
- Owen, D.M. 1984. *The Making of King's Lynn: A Documentary Survey*. London: The British Academy.
- Page, W. (ed.) 1906. *A History of the County of Norfolk: Volume 2*. London: Victoria County History.  
<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/norf/vol2/pp328-329>
- Pantin, W.A. 1963. 'The Merchants' Houses and Warehouses of King's Lynn', *Medieval Archaeology* 6–7, pp. 173–81. [https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-769-1/dissemination/pdf/vol06-07/6\\_173\\_181.pdf](https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-769-1/dissemination/pdf/vol06-07/6_173_181.pdf)
- Parker, V. 1971. *The Making of King's Lynn: Secular Buildings from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century*. London: Phillimore.
- Pestell, T. 2014. 'Bawsey – A 'Productive' Site in West Norfolk' in Ashley, S. and Marsden, A. (eds) *Landscapes and Artefacts: Studies in East Anglian Archaeology Presented to Andrew Rogerson*. Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology. pp. 139–165.
- Pevsner, N. and Wilson, B. 1999. *The Buildings of England: Norfolk 2: North-West and South*. London: Yale University Press.
- Pitcher, D. 2008 'The Red Mount Chapel, King's Lynn' in McNeill, J. (ed.) *King's Lynn and the Fens: Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology*. Leeds: British Archaeological Association. pp. 17–27.
- Richards, P. 1990. *King's Lynn*. Chichester: Phillimore.
- Richards, W. 1812. *The History of Lynn*. 2 vols. King's Lynn: W.G. Whittingham.  
<https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=sTcGAQAIAAJ>
- Richmond, H. and Taylor, R. 1976. '28, 30 and 32 King Street, King's Lynn: An Interim Report', *East Anglian Archaeology* 2, pp. 247–9. <http://eaareports.org.uk/publication/report2/>
- Richmond, H., Taylor, R. and Wade-Martins, P. 1982. 'Nos 28–34 Queen Street, King's Lynn', *East Anglian Archaeology* 14, pp. 108–24. <http://eaareports.org.uk/publication/report14/>

- Robertson, D., Crawley, P., Barker, A. and Whitmore, S. 2005. *Norfolk Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment Survey. Assessment Report and Updated Project Design*. Norfolk Archaeological Unit Report 1045.  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/100-2005>
- Royal Archaeological Institute (RAI). 1932. 'Proceedings at Meetings of the Royal Archaeological Institute', *The Archaeological Journal* 89, pp. 327–85.  
<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/archjournal/contents.cfm?vol=89>
- Rutledge, E. and Rutledge, P. 1978. 'King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth: Two Thirteenth-Century Surveys', *Norfolk Archaeology* 37, pp. 92–115.  
<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/issue.xhtml?recordId=1180191>
- Smith, T.P. 1970. 'The Medieval Town Defences of King's Lynn', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 33.1, pp. 57–88.
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). 1945. *King's Lynn: Report and Survey of the Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest*. London: SPAB.
- Stafford, E. and Howsam, C. 2022. *Chapel Street Car Park and the Common Staithe, King's Lynn, Norfolk: Report on Geoarchaeological Boreholes*. OA Report No. 2576.
- Taylor, W. 1844. *The Antiquities of King's Lynn, Norfolk*. Lynn: J. Thew.  
<https://archive.org/details/antiquitiesofkin00tayluoft>
- Wade-Martins, P. 1977. *The Demolition of 28–32 Queen Street, King's Lynn*. Gressenhall: Norfolk Archaeological Unit.
- Wade-Martins, P. 1982. 'No. 22 King Street, King's Lynn', *East Anglian Archaeology* 14, pp. 125–8.  
<http://eaareports.org.uk/publication/report14/>
- Wade-Martins, P. 2014. 'An Experiment in Conservation: The Early Years of the Norfolk Archaeological Trust' in Ashley, S. and Marsden, A. (eds) *Landscape and Artefacts: Studies in East Anglian Archaeology Presented to Andrew Rogerson*. Oxford: Archaeopress. pp. 235–49.
- Wade-Martins, P. 2017. *A Life in Norfolk's Archaeology*. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Williams, A. and Martin, G. (eds) 2002. *Domesday Book*. London: Penguin.
- Yaxley, S. (ed.) 1993. *The Siege of King's Lynn 1643*. Dereham: The Larks Press.



