

Lowestoft

Port Heritage Summary



Contents

Abbreviations	1
Introduction	2
Location	2
The Port	3
Local Authorities and heritage organisations	3
Historical development of the port and its North Sea roles and relationships	3
Early History	3
The Denes and the Beach Village.....	4
Development of the Inner and Outer Harbour	5
20th Century	6
Port-related heritage assets and contributions to present character	9
Conservation values of the port heritage assets	14
Evidential	14
Historical	15
Aesthetic	15
Communal	15
Current levels of heritage protection	16
Pressures for change	17
Heritage risk assessment and opportunities ..	18
References and further reading	20
Websites	20

Abbreviations

ABP	Associated British Ports
BP	Before Present (1948)
c	circa
HE	Historic England
HER	Historic Environment Record (Suffolk County Council)
LB	Listed Building
NGR	National Grid Reference
NRHE	National Record for the Historic Environment
NTL	Normal Tidal Limit
MP	Member of Parliament
OS	Ordnance Survey
Ro-Ro	Roll on - Roll off
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
RNPS	Royal Naval Patrol Service
PDZ	Policy Development Zone (a management area included in an SMP2)
SM	Scheduled Monument
SMP2	Shoreline Management Plan 2
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

Historic England is committed to delivering constructive, impartial advice. This report was produced by Cornwall Archaeological Unit, commissioned by Historic England. The views suggested may not all be shared by Historic England.

© Historic England 2016

No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior permission of the publisher.

All photographs by Cornwall Archaeological Unit.

Cover illustration

The view north towards Town Quay across the Inner Harbour with the Customs House in the background.

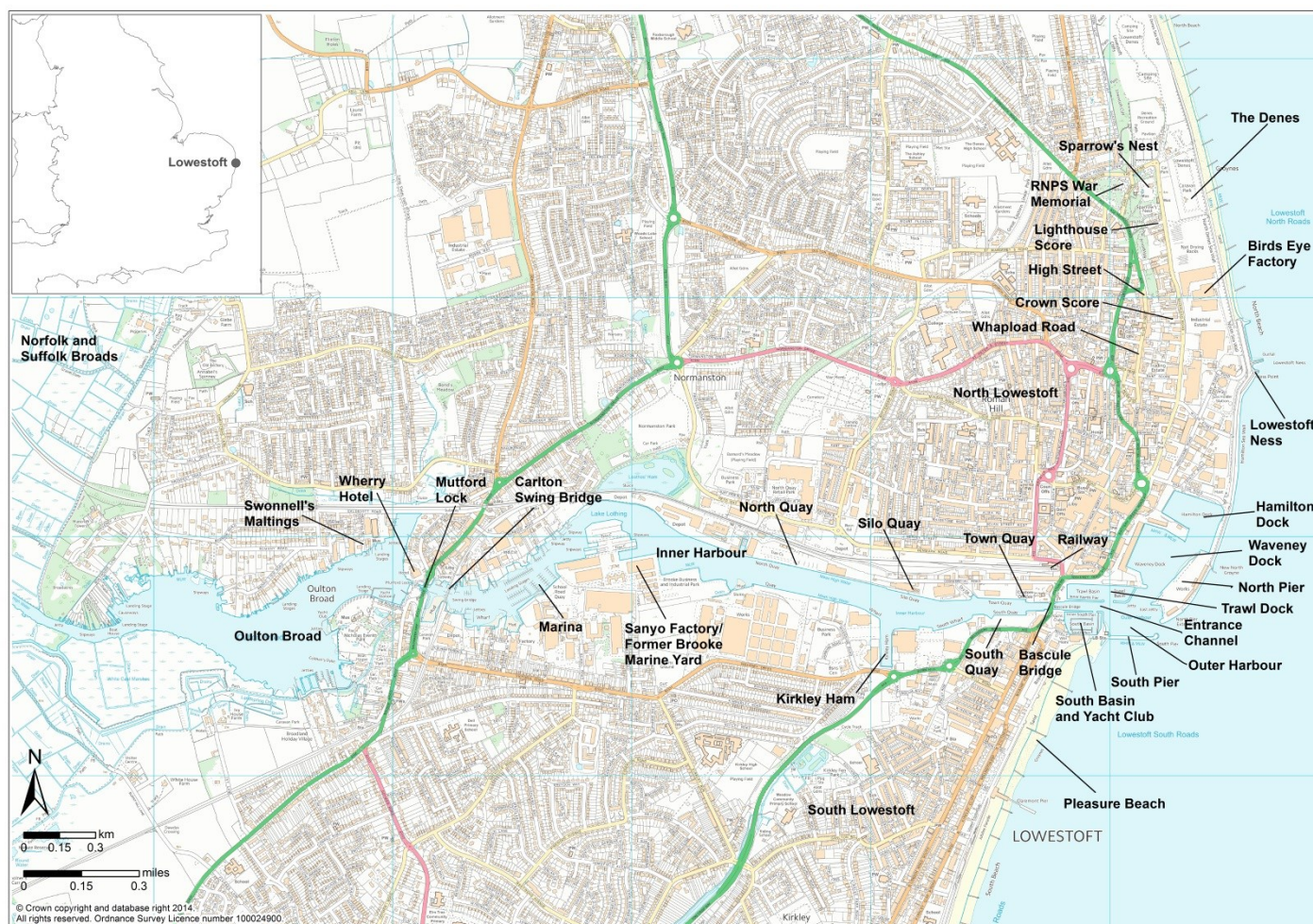


Fig 1 Location, topography, place-names and features.

Introduction

The *England's North Sea Ports* project aims to improve the understanding of the heritage values, significance, vulnerability and adaptability to change of port-related heritage in nineteen major ports along England's North Sea coast, from Berwick upon Tweed, Northumberland, to Harwich, Essex. The project focuses on the historical development of each port, its present character and its port-related heritage, the values attached to that heritage and the issues and opportunities it presents for future development.

The review for each port is presented as an illustrated 'Port Heritage Summary', designed to be succinct and readable, raising awareness and understanding amongst all parties interested in that port's future development and so contributing towards the sustainable management of its port-related heritage.

This Port Heritage Summary relates to Lowestoft in Suffolk where nine individual areas of port-related character have been identified. The Summary explains how port heritage within those areas contributes to Lowestoft's distinctiveness today, to the interpretation of Lowestoft's historical development, and that of the East Anglia and the North Sea. This includes the cultural associations and feelings of local people and communities to the maritime past and how it is viewed and valued by them today.

A range of management options to build on the present values and roles of its heritage are summarised, enabling them to serve as a positive asset in Lowestoft's future, retaining its cultural distinctiveness while meeting its changing economic needs.

Location

Lowestoft is located 43km south east of Norwich and 17km south of Great Yarmouth on the east coast of Suffolk.

The port is formed of two parts; the Inner Harbour (W) and Outer Harbour (E).

The Inner Harbour has been developed around a former freshwater lake, Lake Lothing. Much altered, the lake is now brackish as it has been connected to the North Sea and the Outer Harbour by a man-made entrance channel.

The Outer Harbour extends into the North Sea, and has been created by four man-made basins (South Basin, Trawl Basin, Waveney Dock and Hamilton Dock) located either side of an entrance channel. At the western end of the entrance channel the Bascule bridge divides the Outer Harbour from the Inner Harbour.

Four kilometres inland, the western end of the Inner Harbour connects to Oulton Broad, part of the inland waterways which form the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads.

The historic core of the town of Lowestoft is located to the north of the Outer Harbour. An area of low-lying coastal land, The Denes, is found to the east of the town, below the former cliff line. The Denes extend 2.5km north from Lowestoft Ness, the most easterly point in the United Kingdom.

To the south of the Inner and Outer Harbours the modern industrial and residential areas of the town now include the formerly separate settlements of Kirkley, Pakefield and Carlton Colville.

The Port

Associated British Ports (ABP) own and operate the Port of Lowestoft and constitute the Harbour Authority. The Authority has responsibility for maintaining a safe and navigable port environment.

The Port handles approximately 100,000 tonnes of cargo each year and its landward port operations cover a total area of 97 acres.

It is the operation and maintenance base for the Greater Gabbard offshore wind farm, located 22km offshore from the coast of Suffolk. Other engineering and fabrication companies operate from the port, providing support to the North Sea oil and gas fields and other offshore wind farms (Capt G Horton, Deputy Harbour Master, pers comm).

The Outer Harbour consists of four basins: the Hamilton and Waveney Docks and the Trawl Basin to the north of the entrance channel are primarily used for commercial vessels and have engineering and fabrication facilities. The South Basin, to the south of the entrance channel, serves the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club and is mostly used by leisure craft.

Within the Inner Harbour, the northern side is equipped with a dry dock, ship repair facilities and accommodation for cargo. The North Quay Terminal has mobile crane and the adjacent Silo Quay has a 14,000 tonne capacity storage facility for dry bulk materials. The south side of the Inner Harbour has been largely redeveloped for retail and business use. However, at its far western end the leisure marina is operated by Lowestoft Haven Marinas, a subsidiary of ABP.

West of the Inner Harbour and Lake Lothing, Oulton Broad is accessed through the Mutford Lock. Oulton Broad has boating and leisure facilities and provides access to the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads. Sentinel Enterprises Ltd operates these facilities on behalf of Waveney District Council.

ABP operate the Bascule road bridge (which is owned and maintained by the Highways Agency), controlling access for boats between the Inner and Outer Harbours and for road traffic between the north and south areas of the town.

Local Authorities and heritage organisations

Lowestoft comes under Suffolk County Council, which oversees management of the Historic Environment Record (HER - database of historic buildings and archaeological sites and monuments) and provides

heritage input and advice for archaeological mitigation on a county-wide basis.

Suffolk County Council manages three branches of the County Record Office with the office for the Waveney area located in Lowestoft. Waveney District Council has responsibility for planning and management of two Lowestoft Conservation Areas. The Oulton Broad Conservation Area is managed by the Broads Authority, the area of which extends to part of the western edge of Lowestoft (up to Mutford Lock).

The Historic England (HE) East of England office is in Cambridge. HE provides input and advice on heritage matters including the roles of the inherited cultural environment in the management of change and specific advice for Listed Buildings (LB) and Scheduled Monuments (SM), together with strategic overviews and support at local, regional and national levels.

Historical development of the port and its North Sea roles and relationships

Lowestoft's history as a port is inextricably linked with the exploitation of herring and, later, other forms of fishing. Onshore processing of the fish was carried out alongside the beach and harbour with Lowestoft famed for its high quality red herrings.

The present port infrastructure is a result of the coming of the railway and the investments made by Samuel Peto in the mid-19th century. This led to the expansion of the port-related industry and the rapid expansion of the fishing fleet. However, since the end of the Second World War the port has faced considerable economic pressure and the decline of its fishing fleet. Despite these setbacks the port still forms an important component of the town's economy and has diversified to become a base for the offshore energy industry.

Early History

During the 19th century the excavation of Lake Lothing to create the Inner Harbour uncovered the possible remains of a Roman road and bridge (Scott Wilson Ltd *et al* 2007).

A settlement had been established in this area by the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086. Referred to as 'Lothwistoft', the name is derived from an Old English personal name *Hlothver* and *toft*, Old Norse for 'building plot' (Key to English Place-Names website).

Economically the community relied on agriculture and fishing with some of the rent due to Hugh de Montford, Lord of the nearby manor, being paid in herring (Butcher 2000; Scott Wilson Ltd *et al* 2007a).

It is likely that the inhabitants would have been required by the manor to contribute to peat cutting in the surrounding wetlands. Peat was used as a domestic fuel and was cut so extensively as to have effectively formed the Broads. There is evidence to suggest that Lake Lothing and Oulton Broad were formed as a result of peat cutting activity undertaken until at least the 14th century. At this time the

settlement of Lowestoft was situated approximately 1.6km west of the present High Street around the parish church of St Margaret (Malster 1982).

Lake Lothing was very much separate to the south of the town as it was not connected to the sea. At this time it was simply a freshwater lake more in common with the Broads.

By the 14th century the settlement had moved to the higher ground around High Street. The move was a result of the growing importance of the fishing industry. The topography of the new settlement enabled the separation of the merchant's residential and commercial premises on the top of the cliff, from the fish processing and related industries carried out below, on the edge of the Denes. The Denes place-name probably derives from its location as sandy low-lying coastal land (Scott Wilson *et al* 2007a).

At this time the medieval burgage plots (tenement or property boundaries) and "Scores" were laid out. The High Street and Denes were linked by the Scores. These narrow lanes are thought to take their name from the Old Norse '*skora*' meaning 'to cut' or 'make an incision' and it is considered probable that this originates from water cutting channels into the soft cliff. They are often steep and winding as result of the geography (*ibid*).

In the medieval period herring fishing was conducted entirely by boats launched off the beach, as there was no substantial port infrastructure at Lowestoft.

The herring were rarely consumed locally but exported to the Catholic countries of southern Europe, where the consumption of meat was restricted to certain days and preserved fish eaten as a substitute. The success of fishing off Lowestoft, and its exports abroad, was such that Great Yarmouth felt sufficiently threatened to obtain the Statute of Herrings in 1357. This restricted Lowestoft's activity by granting Great Yarmouth's bailiffs control of the herring fishery for seven leagues (approximately equivalent to 33km) from their quays (Butcher 2000). This system carried on in much the same way, with gradual modernisation, until the 17th century.

The Denes and the Beach Village

From the 17th century onwards fishing and maritime activity at Lowestoft became increasingly formalised.

Leading lights for navigation were established in 1609 in response to petitions from mariners regarding the dangerous sandbanks off the coast. These were the first lights erected by Trinity House in their role to aid navigation as set out in the Seamarks Act of 1566. The exact location of the lights is unknown but when they were replaced in the late 17th century a High Light was documented at the top of the cliff near the present Lighthouse Score.

England's herring fishery experienced considerable economic recession in the 17th century. The causes of this decline were complex in origin but partly due to the success of the Dutch. The Dutch had as many as 2000 'busses', sturdy ships capable of staying at sea for longer, with more men aboard to salt and barrel the fish at sea than the English boats. Smaller

boats, called *ventjagers*, were used to remove the packed barrels and bring supplies so the busses could stay at sea for even longer periods. The Dutch achieved superior quality fish by salting and landing their catch quickly. By contrast, there was not this degree of organisation or advances in boat technology within the English fleet.

Economic recovery was helped in Lowestoft by it being granted port status in 1679. This gave the town the power to develop formal port-related infrastructure and governance. Formerly, fishing from Lowestoft had been subject to rules set by Great Yarmouth but this grant gave Lowestoft the freedom to operate independently, to impose and collect its own fees and the autonomy to develop in direct response to its herring trade (Malster 1982; Butcher 2000).

In 1706 the Low Light was removed because of encroachment of the sea but was reinstated in the 1730s after years of complaints from the local fishermen. This new light was designed to be easily moveable should the main channel to Lowestoft shift, as its position depended on the movement of the sandbanks.

Lowestoft was developing into a highly successful fishing port and by the 1790s the fishing community on the Denes, the Beach Village, had developed and continued to grow. At the bottom of the cliff, it was separate from the main town and a distinctive place with its own strong identity. It was also regularly threatened by flooding by the North Sea.

At this time the 'great boats', three-masted vessels built specifically for herring fishing, could work a mile of nets which were shot at sunset as the herring rose to the surface. The boats would drift on the tide for approximately six hours and stay at sea until they caught 120,000-140,000 fish which were salted on board ready for the homeward journey. Ashore, the Lowestoft speciality was 'red herrings', whereby the fish were not gutted, salted for two or three days and then smoked over slow burning fires (Butcher 2000).

Fishing into the 19th century was conducted solely from the beach and adjacent Denes. In this period the herring trade employed up to 75% of local men and supported numerous associated industries. Lowestoft's fishing fleet also undertook summer sea-lining voyages as well as the autumn herring drift fishery.

Records show that the inhabitants were also engaged in a range of fishing, salvage and pilotage operations. The Beach Village seamen grouped together, initially forming 'Beach Companies' to crew the pilot boats that competed for this work. The Beach Companies were reconstituted in 1835 after which time the men could hold shares in the boats instead of just being members of the crew.

The pilot was usually a local man employed and certified as competent by Trinity House. To be judged competent the prospective pilot would have to prove he had exceptional seafaring skills and knowledge of the waterways off the coast of Suffolk and Norfolk to the Thames Estuary. Pilots were



Fig 2 The Lowestoft lighthouse located on the top of the cliff slope above the Denes. It is on the same site as the former High Light.

needed because the shifting and shallow sands on this stretch of coast were a serious hazard to visiting boats on the trading routes. This meant the pilots could travel large distances from the port where they were based in the course of each operation.

The pilot would own his boat though help with its purchase was often provided by merchants who benefitted from the pilot's services. The pilot boat was usually a yawl, a sailing ship designed to cope with the roughest sea but also fast enough to be first to get to the boat requiring pilotage or rescue.

The activities of the Beach Companies fed into the founding of the local lifeboat, seamen's missions and Royal Naval organisations during the 19th century. The pilotage work of the Companies was brought to an end in 1905 when Trinity House stationed two steam pilot cutters at Harwich, negating the need for local pilot boats (Malster 1982).

Development of the Inner and Outer Harbour

The 19th century saw considerable development of the port with the creation of a formal harbour, stimulated by the passing of the Norwich and Lowestoft Navigation Bill in 1827. Prior to this there was no inlet or sheltered anchorage at Lowestoft.

The Bill had been mainly promoted by Norwich-based merchants looking for alternatives to the existing ports of Great Yarmouth and Gorleston (12km to the north of Lowestoft) to avoid the high fees and congested port traffic.

The Bill enabled construction of the first Inner and Outer Harbours and a canal linking the River Yare at Reedham to the River Waveney at St Olaves. (The Yare passes through Norwich and the Waveney flows to Oulton Broad and Lowestoft.)

As part of the scheme a lock at Mutford linked Oulton Broad to Lake Lothing. A cutting was made to extend Lake Lothing and by linking it with the sea the Inner Harbour was formed. The natural shoreline of Lake Lothing was retained at the western end of the Harbour but the eastern end was cut back to form space for quays to be built. At first the creek of Kirkley Ham was maintained but this was gradually infilled over the next 100 years to provide additional quay space.



Fig 3 The remaining net drying racks on the Denes. Note the warehouses and net stores at the foot of the wooded cliff slope leading up to the High Street (right) with the factory and wind turbine in the area of the former Beach Village (left).

At the east end of the Inner Harbour was a sea lock. It was protected from the North Sea by two simple piers to the north and south that created an entrance channel to the Inner Harbour. The sea lock was built to allow a build-up of water behind the gates with which to flush out the sediment being deposited in the entrance channel.

The construction of Mutford Lock allowed Oulton Broad to be used for the first time by commercial traffic travelling between Lowestoft and Norwich. Mutford Lock is unusual as it is a double lock to prevent the incoming tides through Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth opposing each other within the inland waterways and to maintain Oulton Broad as freshwater. It operates in the same way today, still using the design by William Cubitt, the famous Norfolk engineer and one of the proponents of the first harbour scheme at Lowestoft (Hogg 2014).

Mutford Lock was completed just before the official harbour opening in 1831. However the navigation scheme was already in financial trouble by 1839 when the sea lock failed and the harbour silted up. Various attempts to fix the lock came to nothing and it was not until the entire harbour was sold to Samuel Morton Peto in 1844 that the venture was rescued.

Peto was variously a developer, engineer, railway pioneer, Member of Parliament (MP) and entrepreneur. He was already famous for his building schemes in London, initially as part of a family business, and construction of the Grand Crimean Central Railway, delivering supplies during the Crimean War. His connections to East Anglia date from 1841 when he bought Bracondale House in Norwich, where he later served as MP. Although he also purchased Somerleyton Hall, near Lowestoft, in 1844, Peto's association with the port and town was an economic one.

Peto's improvements included the construction of the Outer Harbour with enhanced north and south piers and the development of the north side of the Inner Harbour with warehouses and a quay. One of the earliest facilities here was a timber dry dock built in 1856. The dry dock was financed by the new railway, which also added sidings and loading areas north of the Inner Harbour (Malster 1982).



Fig 4 Mutford Lock, as seen from Oulton Broad, which marks the change from port-related infrastructure of the Inner Harbour to the leisure activity of Oulton Broad.

The new railway line from Lowestoft to Reedham was linked to the Norwich to Great Yarmouth line. A second line, to Beccles, necessitated the addition of the Carlton Swing Bridge adjacent to the Mutford Lock.

The new harbour facilities, built in conjunction with the railway, led to a diversification of port-related activity including the export of cattle, salt imports, the import of cattle and horses from Denmark, and ice from Norway. Linseed oil factories, grain mills, maltings and breweries were built surrounding the new Inner and Outer Harbours. The businesses were attracted by the new rail connections and port facilities in an agricultural region associated with grain growing on a large-scale. Webber, Hodge and Company operated an oil mill to the north of the Inner Harbour (on Commercial Road) and the Harrison family ran a flour mill on Oulton Broad where Truman's and Swonnell's Maltings could also be found.

The south side of the Inner Harbour was also developed, with many businesses moving there from the Denes. South Quay and South Wharf had timber and boat building yards and, further to the west, the East Anglian Ice Company had its own wharf where it manufactured 'artificial' ice for fish exports.

The herring fishing fleet, like the shipbuilding industry, also moved away from the Denes to operate from the newly-built harbour facilities. Small-scale inshore fishing boats, however, continued to launch from the beach. With the combination of port and railway infrastructure and the onset of the Industrial Revolution, a new market opened up for fish in the form of ever-growing cities now consuming relatively cheap and plentiful fresh fish (Malster 1982).

The increase in the port's trade, and the continuing need to improve its navigation, led to a new lighthouse replacing the High Light in 1874. Built on the same site above the Denes, the construction work was undertaken to make it suitable for electric light, the technology for which was still in its infancy in the 1870s. However, the use of paraffin in lighthouses was developed at the same time and as it was much less expensive to run, the change to electricity was abandoned (Trinity House website).



Fig 5 The Inner Harbour with the port infrastructure on the Town and Silo Quays (left) and South Wharf (right).

The herring fishery was so successful that it required multiple extensions to the Outer Harbour's facilities including a new fish market and dock basin, the Waveney Dock. This opened in 1883 and was named after Sir Robert Alexander Shafto Adair, Lord Waveney.

In 1891 another extension was required and the Trawl Basin was added. The trawl fleet was increasing in size as the Dogger Bank in the North Sea was found to be a particularly rich fishing ground. Trawling in Lowestoft had begun in 1851 when trawlers from Barking, near London, began using its harbour because of its rail link.

The North Pier had to be repeatedly extended and remodelled to accommodate these new docks and the harbour entrance dredged to maintain depth.

Although fishing on a large scale was no longer conducted from the beach, the Denes were still used for net drying, fish smoking, and fishing-related industries such as barrel and rope production. These had expanded across the Denes to keep pace with the rapid growth of the herring fleet. The Denes also continued to be the focus of Lowestoft's fishing community, with many people involved in fishing living here (Malster 1982).

In tandem with the developments to the harbour, Peto also created South Lowestoft as a tourist resort, at a time when holidays became an increasingly accessible luxury for people. He built a range of terraced houses and pleasure grounds, including a hotel, and the railway that served the docks began to accommodate visitors. The scheme was successful and South Lowestoft grew rapidly.

20th Century

In the early 20th century Lowestoft reached its peak as a herring and fishing port, requiring the westward extension to the Trawl Dock and the building of Hamilton Dock in 1906. The new dock was an expansion of Waveney Dock and named after Lord Claud Hamilton, a director and chairman of the Great Eastern Railway.

Rapid development also occurred at Oulton Broad as sailing for pleasure became a more common pastime and people began to have more time for recreation. In addition to Wherry Hotel, built in 1899 on the site of a smaller inn, large boat building yards and boat hire companies were built in the area immediately



Fig 6 The South Basin with the Grade II* Listed Yacht Club, cafés and East Point Pavilion in the background.

west of Mutford Lock. A few years later the northwest bank of Oulton Broad was also developed with small boat yards and large maltheuses, including Swonnell's Maltheuses.

At the South Basin, the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club building was completed in 1903. It accommodated the increasing number of recreational sailors based at or visiting Lowestoft.

It was at this time that the boat yards around the Inner Harbour reached their peak in terms of both size and diversity of production. Fishing vessels, gigs, yawls, RNLI lifeboats, motor yachts, high speed launches and small vessels for the Admiralty were all built there.

The Inner Harbour was the home of the Brooke and Richards families' boat-building yards.

The Brooke family originally owned a small foundry but in the early 20th century they began to specialise in motor engines and, from 1911, in boatbuilding and shipbuilding. Its first shipyard was at North Quay, on the northern side of the Inner Harbour. During the First World War the company established a munitions factory and the yard later expanded to build boats up to 16m in length. In the Second World War it produced and serviced motor launches, sea plane tenders and landing craft for the Royal Navy and other Allied forces (Brooke Marine Wikipedia entry).

Lowestoft was viewed as a sufficiently important port to be subject to German naval bombardment in 1916, when four people were killed. The targeting of Lowestoft was part of a wider German plan to draw the British Navy out into battle and because the port was a base for mine laying and sweeping operations. Many of the mine ships were local trawlers requisitioned by the Admiralty. The war memorial adjacent to the Yacht Club on the South Basin records the names of the 716 service men from Lowestoft who were killed during the First World War. In the years immediately following the War the fishing fleets recovered well though mines and war debris continued to cause casualties and damage.

The dry dock in the Inner Harbour was rebuilt in concrete in 1928 and there was a boom in fishing. However, this was short-lived as by the 1930s the herring fishery began to falter due to declining fish stocks (Ashcroft 2000; Malster 1982).

With the onset of the Second World War significant coastal defences were built along the beach front and the Denes including pill boxes and anti-landing devices, to protect the area from invasion.

As in the First World War, trawlers were requisitioned and stationed at Lowestoft for mine sweeping operations. The freedom to fish was almost completely curtailed due to the lack of vessels, threat from enemy action and restrictions enforced by the Government (Ashcroft 2000).

The headquarters of the Royal Naval Patrol Service (RNPS), *HMS Europa*, were built at the northern end of the Denes. Its location took advantage of the high quantity of skilled seamen in the locality that could staff their operation. A memorial to RNPS personnel killed in action and with no known grave is located above the former headquarters in Belle Vue Park.

After the War restrictions on fishing were quickly lifted. Stocks had recovered a little as a result of six years of minimal fishing and the herring industry experienced a short boom but this was all but over by 1949 (Ashcroft 2000).

However, Lowestoft's connection with the food industry continued when, in 1952, the frozen food company Birds Eye built a complete production unit for frozen food in Lowestoft. The company already had a factory in Great Yarmouth where the 'Fish Finger' had been developed alongside a new fast-freezing process which was used for peas and herrings. The Lowestoft factory was built to add capacity for freezing vegetables and latterly in the production of burgers and potato waffles (Birds Eye website and Wikipedia page).

The trawling fishery exploiting cod, plaice, haddock and skate fared better but has declined rapidly since the 1970s to the extent that fewer than ten trawlers are now registered at Lowestoft (Capt G. Horton, Deputy Harbour Master, pers comm).

On 31st January 1953 a combination of high tides and severe storm conditions led to a devastating storm surge that flooded much of the low lying east coast of England and southern Scotland. In Lowestoft the sea came over the newly built sea defences, completely flooding the Beach Village and the Denes whilst the Inner Harbour breached its banks. The Lowestoft tidal gauge recorded sea levels 2m higher than normal. In response, sea defences in the locality have been constantly maintained and upgraded and an early warning system put in place to evacuate homes. The concrete walls north of the harbour dividing the beach from the Denes are part of this wider system.

The damage from the Second World War air raids and the significant destruction from the 1953 storm surge resulted in the clearance of the Beach Village. It was redeveloped by light industry including more recently, the large modern Birds Eye factory on the South Denes (Scott Wilson Ltd *et al* 2007a).

In terms of shipbuilding, Lowestoft experienced a small renaissance after the Second World War. In 1940 the Brooke family's shipbuilding firm had been bought by a Harry Dowsett and renamed Brooke Marine. Its operations moved to a new shipyard in

1954 on the southern side of the Inner Harbour and the old yard closed in 1955. The yard built fishing trawlers and patrol boats for a variety of clients around the world, producing over 300 craft until it closed in 1987. Later that year Brooke Yachts was set up and purchased the yard, building yachts until it ceased trading in 1992. In 1993 most of the equipment was sold off but between 2006 and 2009 Brooke Marine Yachts Ltd attempted to relaunch the yard before it was sold to an investment company (Brooke Marine Wikipedia entry).

By the later 20th century Lowestoft's port faced considerable economic pressure. Its fishing fleet had declined and Lowestoft found itself remote from the trunk road network for the redistribution of goods coming in and out of the port. The size and depth of its entrance channel and docks also limited the size of vessels using the harbour. Furthermore, Lowestoft's tourist trade also gradually declined throughout the latter part of the 20th century as holidays abroad became more affordable. This was coupled with a serious decline of the pleasure boat industry on Oulton Broad from the 1970s, with the last hire company closing in 2006 (Hogg 2014).

As a result, there has been limited modernisation and development to Lowestoft's port infrastructure. Small-scale piecemeal changes have gradually adapted the port's quayside facilities to suit its current use as a base for survey and supply vessels for the North Sea energy industry, including oil, gas and wind turbine operations (Hamilton, Waveney, and Trawl Docks), the fabrication of turbines (the North Pier), and for use by recreational craft (South Basin) and as a cargo port (Inner Harbour).

The low lying areas of the town, including the Inner Harbour and Oulton Broad, are still at risk from North Sea storm surges. In 2007 and again in 2013, parts of the town were flooded. The December 2013 event was reminiscent of the 1953 storm surge as sea levels rose to similar levels. However, better sea defences and meteorological predictions meant it did not have quite the same widespread and devastating impact.

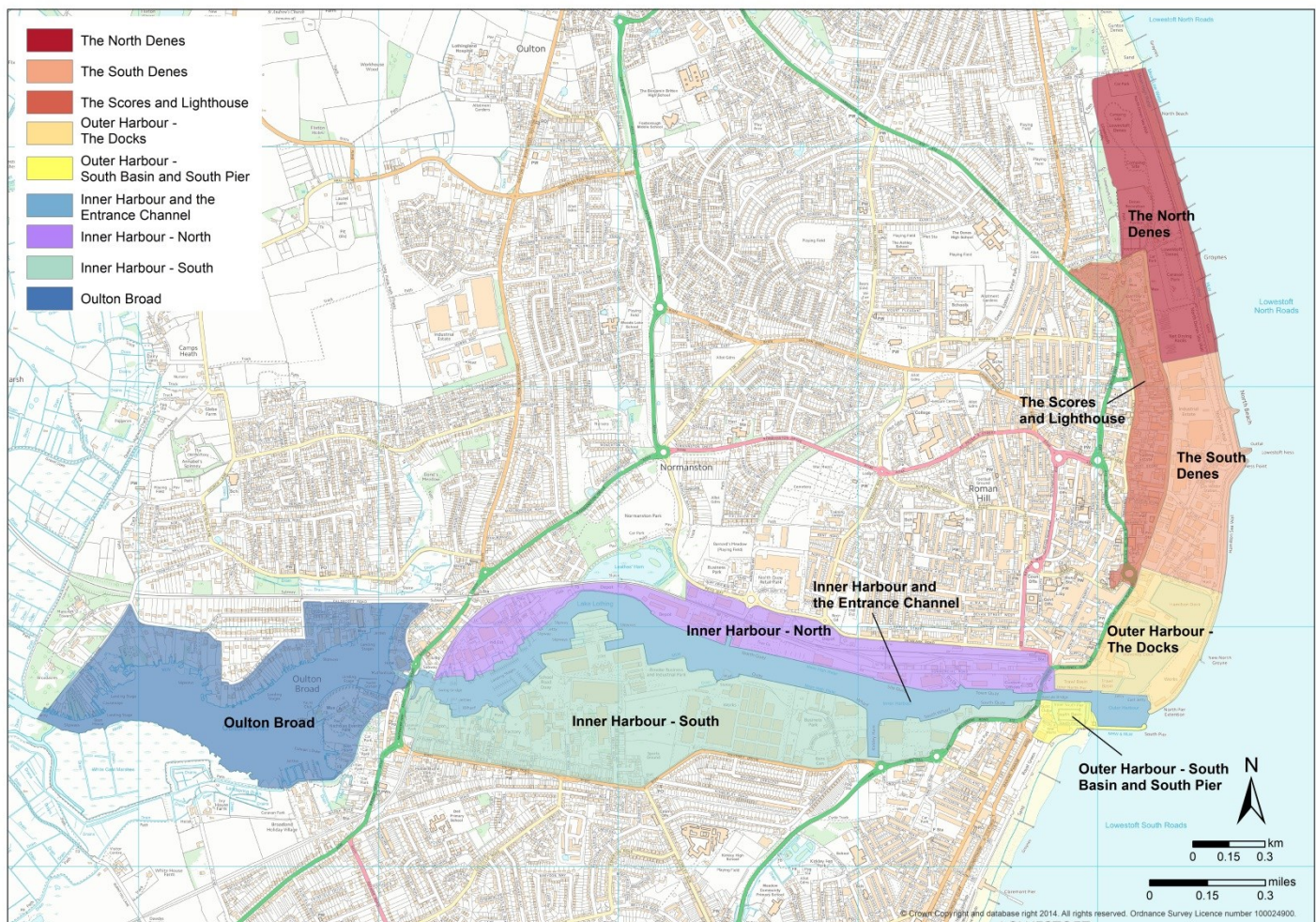


Fig 7 Character Areas.

Port-related heritage assets and contributions to present character

Lowestoft's overall port-related area has been divided into nine distinctive Character Areas (Fig 7).

The distinctive feel of these Character Areas is shaped by their historical development and influenced in the present by patterns and sometimes direct survivals from their inherited past. That heritage can be many and various – place-names, street layouts, patterns of open space, whether public or private, a sense of enclosure by closely spaced or large buildings, or the presence of readily recognisable historic buildings and features – they all provide links in the present to Lowestoft's past, even if the original structures which influenced and defined present aspects of the townscape and streetscape may have long gone and been replaced by modern features. These distinctive aspects of place add interest, texture and unique character to the port. The way in which surviving historic aspects within the port's fine-grained landscape, often called heritage assets, interact with that present character serves as a tangible reminder of the cultural origins of the port's distinctiveness. Whether or not people who live in or use Lowestoft have interest in its heritage as such, its historical development has shaped the place which is familiar to them, with which they have cultural associations and where they undertake their recreational, industrial and commercial lives.

This section seeks to examine how the surviving port-related heritage contributes to the present character of Lowestoft.

Character Area Summary

1. The North Denes

Developed in relation to the thriving North Sea herring fishery from the 14th century, it formed a core part of Lowestoft's fishing activity until the early 19th century when the Inner and Outer Harbours were developed and its role within the port changed. The Area became host to secondary industries supporting the fishing fleet, for example, barrel and rope making.

The Area owes its origins to its intimate physical relationship with the North Sea. It was developed on a naturally-formed area of low-lying shingle foreshore behind the beach but below the rocky cliffs which protected the historic core of the town. It was the vagaries of the North Sea and its damaging storm surges that ultimately meant it was no longer a safe place to land and launch fishing vessels and conduct other fishing-related industries. This is clearly demonstrated by the robust modern concrete-built sea defence wall which now separates and hides much of the Area from the sea.

Behind the sea wall, the coastal strip is a mixture of public recreational space and caravan parks, largely built in the later 20th century. The sea wall itself, developed in the 1950s and updated in several

Character Area Summary

phases more recently, also serves as a coastal promenade. This is a popular place for people to watch the North Sea and to enjoy the views up and down the coastline, including to the Greater Gabbard wind farm located off Great Yarmouth, and to vessels coming and going from the Port of Lowestoft.

Links Road, at the northern end of the Area, divides the Lowestoft Denes from the Gunton Denes and sand dunes – the latter giving an indication of how the coastline may have looked before it was developed as part of Lowestoft. This northern part of the Area has caravan parks, sports and recreation areas with resulting good views both out to sea and to the town above, including the lighthouse that would have once guided boats back to the Beach Village.

Towards the southern edge of the Area the wooden racks historically used to dry the fishing nets have been retained to give an appreciation of its former use. Former Trinity House navigation buoys and large old anchors have been added to enhance the port feel of the Area. There are small display boards explaining these features and the history of the fishing industry in the Area, although many are damaged or only partially legible today.

2. The South Denes

Once part of Lowestoft's Beach Village, the Area also formed an integral part of the town's medieval fishing port. As with the North Denes, the Area developed in relation to the thriving North Sea herring fishery from the 14th century and formed a core part of Lowestoft's port activity until the early 19th century when the Inner and Outer Harbours were developed.

The South Denes was also developed on a naturally-formed area of low-lying shingle foreshore behind the beach, below the rocky cliffs which protected the historic core of the town. Subject to similar pressures from the North Sea, the fishing industry met a similar fate as in the North Denes Area.

Little of its true historic time-depth is apparent as the Area is now dominated by large modern industrial buildings. The modern industrial development is located in the area of the Beach Village, cleared after the 1953 storm surge wreaked havoc on the Denes.

However, several of the modern businesses are intimately linked with the port and the area's links with the fishing industry. Wind energy firms and a large wind turbine located in the Area represent the potential future of the port, whilst the large Birds Eye factory links to the past importance of the fishing industry (although it now processes fish products not landed at Lowestoft).

The modern sea defence wall was built to protect the town from storm surges. The wall now separates the landward side of the Area from the North Sea. Its substantial rampart fosters a protective feel and, from its top, provides fine views up and down the Denes and out to the North Sea.

Following the wall, the coast path leads to Lowestoft Ness, the most easterly point in England. The Point has been marked by a Euroscope, part-compass part

Character Area Summary

art installation that highlights distances to notable places around the world. The Ness is also marked by the nearby wind turbine and is visible throughout the town.

3. The Scores and Lighthouse

The narrow lanes or Scores have linked the High Street with the Denes since at least the 14th century. The layout and plan of the Area, and that of the town, reflects the natural topography with the steep and winding Scores located on the cliff slope dividing the high ground of the town, safe from the surges of the North Sea, from the low-lying Denes.

The names, buildings and stories associated with each Score represent key people and events in the history of Lowestoft and are brought together by The Herring Trail. This is a tourist walk with plaques for each of the Scores and art installations to highlight their historic importance and character. They also draw attention to the extensive views out to the North Sea, the Denes and the edge of the Outer Harbour.

A range of historic buildings dating from the 17th to 19th centuries flank the top of several of the Scores. These are often built from either red brick or beach pebbles. The pebble walls are a key characteristic of the earlier buildings found in the town. In times past many of these houses were owned by Lowestoft's merchants dealing in herring and the workings of the port, and the Scores would have been busy thoroughfares rich in the sights and smells of port trade.

Although the Scores are now little used by the fisherman and merchants based at the port, they are regularly used by local residents as shortcuts to Whapload Road on the landward edge of the Denes.

Opposite the drying racks on the Denes, on the western edge of Whapload Road, several 19th century brick-built net stores and warehouses create a distinctive frontage. They are perhaps some of the last reminders of the Beach Village. Set at a right angle to the road they stand in stark contrast to modern light industrial buildings, signage and street furniture.

At the northern end of this Area is Lowestoft's lighthouse. Painted bright white as a navigational day mark, it is purposely designed to be highly visible. Making the most of the natural vantage point of the cliff top, it is short and sturdy in design. Constructed in 1874 it was built at the location of the first light to be erected by Trinity House (in 1609). As an important place for testing advances in lighthouse technology it reflects the high importance bestowed on Lowestoft as a port, and the navigational difficulties it once faced.

Below the lighthouse are the public gardens of Sparrow's Nest and the former headquarters of the RNPS. The park is a busy place with a children's play area, a restaurant and café. The RNPS and Lowestoft Maritime museums, display boards and navigation buoys placed in the park ensure that the historic role of the port in Lowestoft's history is abundantly clear

Character Area Summary

to visitors.

Connected to the Sparrow's Nest via Cart Score, Belle Vue Park on top of the cliff has a more formal and austere feel, perhaps a reflection of the RNPS war memorial located within the park. It is an important focal point in the town for the commemoration of the part its port and local seamen played in the Second World War.

4. Outer Harbour - The Docks

The Area represents the successive late 19th and early 20th century extensions of the port to accommodate the growing herring and trawling fleets, allowing them to unload their catch for processing and redistribution. Located on the north side of the man-made entrance channel, the Docks have been reclaimed from the North Sea and the shingle foreshore.

The Trawl Basin and Waveney Dock were each built in the late 19th century to accommodate the trawling fleet and herring boats respectively. The Hamilton Dock was a later addition in 1906 in response to the huge growth of both types of fishing. Elements of their history, such as iron mooring posts and disused railway lines, are visible.

Today the Docks are used by survey and supply vessels for the North Sea energy industry. Accordingly, the quay walls have been updated and reinforced with concrete and the Docks dredged to accommodate boats with a deeper draught. The frequent activity of the survey and supply vessels is visible from the perimeter fence of the Area, as public access is restricted.

In the corner of Hamilton Dock and the North Pier stands the modern wooden-built clubhouse of the Lowestoft Lifeboatman's Social Club. Evolved from the legacy of the Beach Companies, the club is the continuation of a tradition of local groups coming together in Lowestoft to play an active role in lifesaving and supporting fellow seamen from the port.

The North Pier encloses the Docks from the North Sea. Initially built in the mid-19th century it has been extended with each successive Dock development. Its walling has been modernised, meaning its true historic time-depth is not immediately apparent. It has also recently been adapted for wind turbine fabrication with modern-built sheds, cranes and lifting equipment. The use of the Pier in relation to the offshore wind industry represents the future use of this Area, and the Port of Lowestoft.

5. Outer Harbour - South Basin and South Pier

The Area was built as part of Peto's mid-19th century scheme to improve the harbour and create a tourist resort at South Lowestoft. As such, it is still a focal point for leisure activities in the port.

The Basin and Pier were reclaimed from the North Sea and the shingle foreshore, representing the man-made extension to the port area. Protecting the entrance channel to the port and the South Basin,

Character Area Summary

the South Pier dates to the mid-19th century. Its concrete skin may hide its earlier core but it is likely that it has seen many repairs and re-enforcements as it has frequently been damaged by the North Sea. It is currently closed to the public following the storms of December 2013.

At the landward end of the Pier is the East Point Plaza. Having been vulnerable to the regular storm surges that affect the North Sea coast the area is mostly modern in character. The pavilions and reading rooms built in the late 19th century have gone but it is still used as part of the modern promenade, forming an important part of South Lowestoft's tourist resort.

The East Point Plaza was redeveloped in the 1990s and is an open area and public space from which to join the promenade and enjoy views to the South Basin. The modern Pavilion includes the Tourist Information Centre, the design of which mimics the Victorian buildings that used to stand in the vicinity. The Plaza retains the 19th century Triton Statue that was commissioned by Peto for his tourist resort. This part of the Area is still a focal point for visitors, with display boards on the Pavilion wall encouraging further appreciation of Lowestoft's history.

At the corner of the Plaza is the headquarters of the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club, an ornate arts and crafts style Listed Building dating to 1903. Since its construction in the mid-19th century the South Basin has offered sheltered mooring for a mixture of fishing boats, smaller craft and racing yachts. The Basin is now almost exclusively used by members and visitors to the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club. The Basin has, therefore, been updated with pontoons and gangways and the basin walls have been reinforced with concrete.

The Basin is also home to the *Mincarlo*, a former trawler that has been converted into a museum telling the story of life at sea. The offshore lifeboat is moored next to the *Mincarlo*. The RNLI base is on the east side of the Basin and is open to the public. The base is a modern building but it represents a tradition of lifesaving started with Lowestoft's Beach Companies in the late 18th century.

6. Inner Harbour and the Entrance Channel

This Area was part of the failed 1827 plan to create new port facilities at Lowestoft. Its linear plan and extent owes its origins to Peto's involvement in redeveloping the port in the mid-19th century and in places reflects its origins as part of Lake Lothing, once part of the Broads.

The Area represents the earliest attempts to provide a sheltered harbour for the port, and to link the North Sea with the Broads. Its ultimate success as part of the port is a result of Samuel Peto's efforts and the construction and success of the Great Eastern railway company.

The former lock entrance linking to the Entrance Channel and Outer Harbour is relatively unchanged from its original design of the 1830s. However, it was adapted following the failure of the lock gates not

Character Area Summary

long after its completion.

The channel is still the entry point to both the Inner and Outer Harbour. However, the types of boats now using the entrance channel have changed from fishing boats and those importing ice and cattle to leisure craft and the survey and maintenance vessels for the North Sea energy industry.

The Bascule bridge is the latest version of many bridges on the same site. Since the creation of the Area the bridge has connected the northern and southern parts of Lowestoft town. The frequent movement of different types of boats and the lifting of the bridge means that the workings of the port still have a big impact on the town.

The Inner Harbour forms a large expanse of water over 4km in length. Its western and eastern halves differ in their plan, in the quay walls that define them and in the commercial port activity undertaken within them.

The eastern half of the Area is defined by straight-sided quay walls reflecting its continued use as part of the commercial port. It retains much of its original mid-19th century plan on its northern side but has seen the further extension and reclamation of its banks in the 20th century, on its southern edge, especially around the former creek of Kirkley Ham. Historically, the Inner Harbour was associated with the movement of cargo in and out of the port, a role for which it continues today, albeit with fewer vessel movements.

To the west of Kirkley Ham, on the southern side of the Inner Harbour, the former Brooke ship building yard, dating to the mid to late-20th century, has greatly altered the quay edges. Here, the slipways of the yard create a quay edge which is stepped in plan.

West of the former yard the plan of the Inner Harbour has a softer edge, less straight-sided, preserving more of the former extent of Lake Lothing. However, the Inner Harbour's edge here has been altered several times during the 20th century to create marinas and jetties.

Towards the far western end of the Area is the 19th century Carlton Swing Bridge, a railway bridge built to link the railway line to the goods yard on the northern quay.

The western limit of this Area is defined by Mutford Lock. Today the lock retains wooden lock gates and stone walls reminiscent of, if not original to, the 1827 design. As a 'pinch point' for cars, trains and pedestrians crossing between the north and south of the town and for boats travelling between the Inner Harbour and Oulton Broad, the infrastructure has been modernised to withstand this high volume of traffic. However the main technology for the lock remains unchanged and boat users travelling between the North Sea and the Broads can still experience the double lock system that separates fresh and salt water.

7. Inner Harbour - North

The Area owes its origins in the mid-19th century to

Character Area Summary

the creation of the Inner Harbour when it was developed on its northern side as railways sidings, shipbuilding yards, quays, wharves and a dry dock. Historically, this attracted industrial development including an iron foundry, an oil mill, and a scatter of ship and boat building yards.

It is still used as part of the commercial port for ship repair and transport of bulk goods. The eastern end of the Area is dominated by three quays; the North, Silo and Town Quays.

The North Quay is an early 20th century expansion of the 19th century Barber's Wharf. It was once associated with shipbuilding yards and railway sidings but it is now an extensive quay with large areas of storage space, modern transit sheds and depots. The quay walls have been updated, with modern concrete-built walls and steel shuttering. However, the quay edge incorporates a boat slipway dating to the early 20th century, the only surviving remains of the first yard used by Brooke family for shipbuilding.

The Silo Quay, once part of Barber's Wharf and North Quay, is a modern update of the 19th century quay. It has a modern-built large grain storage silo that dominates the skyline of the Area. Neighbouring the Silo Quay is a dry dock, built in the mid-19th century as part of Peto's development of the Inner Harbour. Although updated in the early 20th century, the dry dock is still used as part of the commercial port, in the repair of short-sea vessels associated with the North Sea offshore energy industry.

Town Quay preserves its mid-19th century extent, although its quay walls have been updated in the modern period with concrete and steel-shuttering. Formerly used by an iron works, the quay now provides moorings for commercial vessels. Near the quay is the former Customs House and Port Office, Port House. Now unused, it is a brick-built building dating to the early history of Peto's Inner Harbour and represents the grandeur and importance associated with the port.

To the north of the Customs House is Commercial Road. The road runs down the back of Town and Silo Quays leading down to North Quay. Publically accessible, it acts as a thoroughfare to supply the port from the landward side. It is lined with several 19th century red-brick buildings that are still used by port-related businesses such as chandlers and boat repair workshops.

The northern end of the dry dock is immediately adjacent to the road and its operations occasionally extend out onto the road because of the size of the modern ships it services. This brings the activity of the port into more intimate contact with the users of the road and the town.

In places, the rails of the former railway lines that fed the quays are set into Commercial Road. To the North of Commercial Road the Area is defined by the railway line that was developed in the 19th century to service the port of Lowestoft. Its success was fundamental to the development of Lowestoft's fishing industry in the late 19th and early 20th

Character Area Summary

centuries. With the increasing importance of road transport for the redistribution of goods it is now only a passenger service.

At the far north eastern corner of the Area is Lowestoft's station. Its grandly-designed entrance hall was built to impress the tourists entering the town and continuing on to Peto's resort at South Lowestoft.

Towards Oulton Broad, the Area remained undeveloped until the early 20th century. Until then it had retained its soft, un-engineered edge. In the early 20th century the Area was developed as part of the commercial port, including shipbuilding yards and an iron foundry.

It is now a modern industrial estate and small area of terraced houses. Much of its waterside edge has been altered again in the 20th century with a series of jetties and slipways, some associated with a former boat building yard.

8. Inner Harbour - South

The Area owes its origins in the mid-19th century to the creation of the Inner Harbour.

Much of its water's edge was soft engineered until the 20th century, except for the eastern end of the Area, at South Quay and South Wharf, which was defined by straight-sided quay walls. For much of the 20th century South Quay was an area of timber and boat building yards. As part of successive reuse and, in places, redevelopment, the quay walls are now faced by modern steel shuttering and concrete.

South Quay is still used as part of the port with vessels for the supply and operation of the North Sea energy industry. At its eastern end, at Pier Terrace, is a terrace of 19th century houses. These stand adjacent to the A12 which leads to Bascule Bridge Road. Next to South Quay, the South Wharf has been extensively redeveloped by a large modern-built supermarket and retail units. However, the extent of the development mirrors that formerly occupied by the timber yards, boat building and, in the early 20th century, a series of large buildings associated with the Crown Works, a boat building firm.

Along the water's edge of South Wharf a modern pathway leads to a statue of a fisherman, recently erected to celebrate Lowestoft's former glory as a fishing port. The pathway is also used by residents, local workers and cyclists. Views of the north side of the Inner Harbour are particularly good from this walkway and it is a good place from which to observe the operation of the port.

To the west of South Wharf, the Area is defined by the modern-built quay walls surrounding Kirkley Ham, dating to the early 20th century reclamation of the former creek, once part of Lake Lothing. The western edge of the Ham was variously a boat building yard and, in the early 20th century, part of a massive preserving factory known as the Raglan Preserving Works and the East Anglian Ice Works. Now redeveloped, this part of the Area is of mixed industrial use although its quay frontage is still used

Character Area Summary

by port-related industry.

From here to the Mutford Lock, the quay frontage owes its survival to reclamation and quayside development dating to the mid-20th century creation of the Brooke Marine ship yard - the area is known to as the Brooke Peninsula. Historic elements of the yard that survive include the slipways, the rails of travelling cranes and former fabrication sheds. Some of these have found reuse as industrial units. Towards Waveney Drive is the former Sanyo factory, which now awaits redevelopment.

The Lowestoft Haven Marina occupies the western end of the former Brooke Marine yard and, further to the west, is a haphazard array of small boat yards, quays and jetties.

The School Road end of the Area is dominated by modern industrial development but includes smaller areas of 19th and early 20th century residential housing and light industrial buildings, including, on Stanley Road, the possible motor works factory associated with Brooke family, now used an oil and paint works.

9. Oulton Broad

The Area is where the Broads meet the Inner Harbour. It was first developed in the 1820s as part of the initial scheme to develop Lowestoft's port infrastructure and open up the trading links with its regional hinterland, in particular Norwich.

Its extent includes the open water of Oulton Broad as well as the land fringing it. Most of the water frontage is built on farmland reclaimed from the Broads, and the waterline of the Area preserves much of the 19th century extent of the Broad.

However, its northern bank was developed in the early 20th century as a series of small boat yards with their jetties, and malthouses.

The boat yards were linked to the recreational use of the broads and the growth of tourism and recreational boating in the 20th century. Some of the yards are still operational for boat building or converted to other light industrial use housed in small modern sheds. Most of the waterside frontage has been redeveloped in the late 20th century as residential properties, making the most of the fine views of the Broad. Many preserve access to the water with moorings and berths at the foot of their gardens.

The imposing five-storey red brick late 19th century malthouses on the north bank, now converted to flats, form a focal point of the built heritage of this Area due to their enormous scale and striking design. They are a testimony to the scale of port-related activity that passed through Oulton Broad as well as the agricultural success of the rural hinterland.

Much of the eastern and southern banks of the Area have been developed in the 20th century as residential development and as a series of marinas and boat parks associated with the recreational use of the Broad, although many of the vessels are also seaworthy and will use the Inner Harbour to navigate

to the North Sea.

Adjacent to Mutford Lock the decoratively-built 19th century Wherry Hotel was, and continues to be, a popular location for residents and visitors to relax and enjoy the view of Oulton Broad. The Hotel is closely associated with the development of recreational boating on the Broads.

Conservation values of the port heritage assets

In 2008, English Heritage published *Conservation Principles*, containing its framework and guidance for assessing the range of values pertaining to the historic environment (English Heritage 2008). *Conservation Principles* identifies four main types of values: Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic and Communal Values (*ibid*). The following subsection uses that framework to present a preliminary assessment of the values and significance attached to Lowestoft's present port-related heritage.

Evidential

– ‘the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity’

Lowestoft's later history of expansion and redevelopment on the sites of, or adjacent to, its earliest port activity gives the surviving earlier features significant evidential value. These assets contribute to the historic character and time-depth of the port's present landscape.

In this respect, Lowestoft's lighthouse is of high significance. The lighthouse dates to 1874 but stands in the location of the first navigational light erected by Trinity House in 1679. The Lowestoft High Lighthouse, in its various phases, was the subject of considerable investment by Trinity House, often at the cutting edge of existing technology. As such, the lighthouse's story is of considerable evidential value to the history of Trinity House.

The lighthouse's location is also good evidence for understanding the earliest phases of Lowestoft as a port, to the navigational challenges it faced, to the development of its Beach companies, and the use of the Denes and, by association, the early herring fishing industry. Its location also highlights the surviving relationship of the Scores with the Denes, in particular the North Denes Character Area and the importance natural topography played on the early development of the port and town.

The Scores still lead directly to the South and North Denes. As the focus for surviving heritage related to the early herring fishing industry, the North Denes Character Area provides strong evidence to the story of Lowestoft and its port. The lack of development on the North Denes and the surviving net drying racks are all important evidence of the scale of the beach-based herring fishery.

The lower sections of the Scores are lined with 19th century brick and beach pebble-built buildings that were used for fish smoking and processing. These

buildings are critical evidence for the understanding of Lowestoft's development and the Beach Village.

The Inner Harbour and Entrance Channel and Outer Harbour – The Docks Character Areas represent the effort and investment needed to develop the port infrastructure of Lowestoft in the 19th century.

Similarly, the four basins within the Outer Harbour – the Docks Character Area (South, Trawl, Waveney and Hamilton) are essential to the understanding of the success of Lowestoft as a nationally important fishing port in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Docks were the focus of commercial fishing activity, providing a safe haven initially to drift fishing boats and later to a trawler fleet in one of the largest herring fisheries on the North Sea coast. Without the harbour expansions these boats would not have been able to work from Lowestoft.

The successive addition of these docks represents the adaptation of the port to the growth of the fishing industry. The creation and then enlargement of the Trawl Basin was in direct response to the encouragement of the trawling industry as an alternative to catching herring.

Part of the success of Lowestoft as a major fishing port in the 19th and early 20th centuries was the incorporation of the railway at an early stage in its development. Although the railway today bears little resemblance to its formerly substantial layout, the remaining rails set into the quays in the Outer Harbour – The Docks and the Inner Harbour – North Character Areas provide good evidence.

The administration needed to run the 19th century port at Lowestoft is demonstrated by the former Port House, developed as a response to the extensive growth of its operations. The Port House also represents the contrast between the early fishing that was loosely organised by the participants off the beach, the Beach Companies, and the later regulation of a formal port.

The plan and extent of the Inner Harbour is important in the understanding of Lowestoft as a port and the huge investment required in the 19th century to develop a safe harbour.

The quays flanking the Inner Harbour, in particular the North Quay, with its surviving dry dock, provide a link to the expansion of 19th century port facilities.

Likewise, the surviving slipways, quays and fabrication sheds on the Brooke Peninsula dating to the mid to late 20th century (and the location for the Lowestoft's ship building industry in the 20th century) are a highly valuable reminder of the port's more recent past.

In the Oulton Broad Character Area, the surviving early 20th century malshouses are evidence for the importance of the port to the region's agricultural hinterland and the development of the Navigation.

The headquarters building of the RNPS, *HMS Europa*, is of significance to the nationally important role that the RNPS played in the Second World War – a role which was inter-linked to the port's fishing industry.



Fig 8 Hamilton Dock, now used by survey and short sea vessels, would have been filled by fishing vessels in the early 20th century.

Historical

– ‘the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative’

The history of herring fishing is the key to understanding the development Lowestoft as a port and town. The understanding of the port’s role in England’s herring fishery is of high value locally and regionally, and for the early 20th century, perhaps nationally. Similarly, in many ways the declining role of fishing in the port forms a commonly occurring theme in the story of England’s North Sea Ports from the mid-20th century onwards.

In addition, the substantial documentary archive held by the County Record Office in relation to the port could be unusual, and potentially enhance the historical value of Lowestoft’s role (Butcher 2000).

Lowestoft has also survived as a port. This adaptability is an ongoing feature of the port as demonstrated by the wind turbine fabricators on the North Pier, and the survey and standby vessels in the Hamilton and Waveney Docks. This is typical of many east coast ports where the decline of fishing, in tandem with the decline of associated trades, has led to diversification into a range of industries, especially offshore energy.

The Port of Lowestoft and its infrastructure owes its success to the efforts made by Samuel Peto to improve the port. Peto’s role is highly significant to the understanding of Lowestoft’s development in the 19th century. Not only did Peto’s efforts expand the port and fishing industry, but through the railway, he also developed Lowestoft as a tourist resort.

Further individuals of low or moderate significance in the understanding of the port’s history are Lord Claud Hamilton and Lord Waveney, after whom the Docks are named. Other local figures of note, many of whom have connections to the port, are commemorated in the place-names and histories of the Scores.

As the home of the RNPS, *HMS Europa*, and its mine sweeping and patrol operations in the North Sea, Lowestoft played a nationally strategic role in the Second World War.



Fig 9 The Top of Mariners Score, with its Listed walls. Note the red herring and information board (left of gateway) that mark the Herring Trail.

The development of the Oulton Broad Character Area is also significant to the port’s history especially in relation to the development of links between the port and its agricultural hinterland, grain exports and malting industry.

Aesthetic

– ‘the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place’

As a working port, Lowestoft’s port activity generates interest, whether from the coming and going of the stand-by vessels, the loading and unloading of cargo ships, or the structures associated with its use. To some, these activities may not be visually attractive but nonetheless many find them stimulating. They arise as a consequence of the historic development of the port and its continuing industrial use today.

The influence of the port’s infrastructure is easy to appreciate as it physically divides the town in two. The workings of the Bascule bridge, making way for vessels using the port, is also a very visible influence of the port’s activities.

The location of the wind turbine in the South Denes Character Area is quite unusual in its proximity to the town and coastline, its vertical scale contrasting with the low-lying Denes. Visible through many of the Scores and from the port, the turbine is a tangible link to the future potential of the port.

Within the Oulton Broad Character Area the aesthetics are quite different as it is distant from the commercial port. The Area is visually dominated by the Broads, however the remaining converted malt houses, boat yards and jetties serve as a visual reminder of the industrial influence of the port.

Communal

– ‘the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory’

Lowestoft is rich in local heritage organisations which celebrate its story. This includes the Lowestoft and Maritime Museums and the Heritage Workshop Centre, which are all run by volunteers (Lowestoft Maritime Museum website; Lowestoft Heritage Workshop Centre website).



Fig 10 Looking along the lower part of Crown Score from Whapload Road.

The Lowestoft Archaeological and History Society is an active group who meet regularly and publish an annual newsletter with articles on the town and surrounding area (The Lowestoft Archaeological and History Society website).

The Royal Naval Patrol Service Museum in Sparrow's Nest Park tells the story of the RNPS, its role in World War Two and its relationship with the local fishing community (Royal Naval Patrol Service Museum website).

The Port of Lowestoft Research Society has an extensive collection of over 14,000 documents and photographs of the vessels and the port. Formed in 1955 with the aim to 'compile a written and photographic record of the port and of the vessels and industries connected with it', the collection is housed by the Lowestoft branch of the Suffolk Record Office (Mr S. Earl, Society Secretary, pers comm).

For visitors there is the Herring Trail and the Art Trail which focus on the Scores, Lowestoft Ness and areas around the port telling the story of fishing and the history of the Scores. The trails are accompanied by art installations located throughout the Scores and town centre to help regenerate the appearance of the town. Focused on the south side of the port, the Peto trail covers key sites in Peto's development of the town and tourist resort.

Current levels of heritage protection

The Scores and Lighthouse Character Area has a high concentration of designated heritage assets, however the majority are Grade II Listed Buildings not directly associated with past or present port activity.

The Mariner's, Crown and Wildes Scores in The Scores and Lighthouse Character Area which lead down towards the South Denes include Grade II Listed walls and steps (LBs 1207038, 1207018, 1279909).

To the rear of 317 Whapload Road is a Grade II warehouse, once associated with the fishing industry. Dating to the 16th century but updated in successive phases, it has been converted into residential flats.



Fig 11 The Bascule bridge crossing the entrance channel between the Inner and Outer Harbours with the large silo on Silo Quay in the background.

Belle Vue Park, at the northern end of The Scores and Lighthouse Character Area is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden (1001621) that contains the Grade II Listed RNPS War Memorial (LB 1385386). Most notable in terms of the port is the lighthouse which is also a Grade II Listed Building (LB 1209999).

The North Lowestoft Conservation Area includes parts of The Scores and Lighthouse and North Denes Character Areas. It is focused upon High Street but includes Belle Vue Park with the war memorial, Sparrow's Nest and the Denes, including the lighthouse and drying racks. It also includes most of the Scores and the 19th century net stores and warehouses on Whapload Road (Scott Wilson 2007a).

The Outer Harbour - South Basin and South Pier Character Area includes the Grade II Listed Statue of Triton (LB 1209835) and the Grade II* Listed Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club (LB 1207043).

Within the Inner Harbour North Character Area the former Port House is Grade II Listed (LB 1292511).

The South Lowestoft Conservation Area includes parts of the Outer Harbour - Docks, Inner Harbour and Entrance Channel and South Basin and South Pier Character Areas. The Conservation Area report comments that the dockside areas are of historic significance, continued importance to the local economy and contribute to the local sense of identity (Scott Wilson 2007b).

The Oulton Broad Conservation Area currently covers much of the Oulton Broad Character Area, including the northern shoreline and residential area, recognising the 19th century development and character of that area.



Fig 12 The wooden net drying racks on the Denes with the 19th century net stores in the background.

Pressures for change

The main pressure upon the port arises from the economic need for it to remain commercially viable. The changing nature of the area's industrial fortunes, the increasing size of vessels, the decline in its fishing industry, and major changes in port technology and provision nationally has meant that Lowestoft has lost its former staple industries and will continue to have to revise its business model to survive as a viable port.

The leisure marinas in the Inner Harbour and Entrance Channel Character Area are successful and the recreational use of the port is likely to increase. The Port is also working hard to attract business from the offshore wind industry, including shore and sea-based activities in and around the Hamilton, Waveney and Trawl Docks. It is possible that this could require the updating and alteration of port infrastructure including the quay frontage, particularly if expansion of the industry requires the use of the Inner Harbour.

The port entrance and channel under the Bascule bridge are no longer wide enough to accommodate many commercial ships, except some of the smaller short-sea vessels, and this may have hastened the loss of the timber import trade from the port in 2013-14. The Port of Lowestoft is planning to dredge the docks within the Outer Harbour to provide deeper mooring facilities for offshore survey vessels. ABP is also consulting stakeholders in the local area in relation to the repair of the South Pier (Capt G. Horton, Deputy Harbour Master, pers comm).

Port House, within the North Harbour Character Area used to function as the harbour office and customs house but is now unused by the Port.

The loss of the timber trade has left a large amount of brownfield land awaiting reuse or redevelopment, particularly within the Inner Harbour North Character Area at the western end of Commercial Road.

As wooden structures, the drying racks in the North Denes Character Area will be in need of regular maintenance and monitoring due to their susceptibility to rot and vulnerability to acts of vandalism.



Fig 13 Swonnell's Maltings, now converted into flats, on the north bank of Oulton Broad.

There is considerable pressure on the historic warehouses and net stores located on the edge of Whapload Road within the North Lowestoft Conservation Area. Several are unused or underused and many are dwarfed by neighbouring modern industrial buildings, large scale signage and advertising boards.

Visitors to the town are likely to find it difficult to get hold of the supporting information for the Herring, Art and Peto Trails as they are not promoted strongly within the town. It is possible that this is due to economic pressure faced by local organisations.

There has been much press and public discussion about the proposals for a new road bridge across Inner Harbour. The proposal is a difficult subject in regard to the continued viability of the port, the economic prosperity of the town and the limitations of the current road network. A new bridge is seen by many as the key to the regeneration of the town and it is likely that the proposal will affect at least the North and South Harbour Character Areas (BBC website pages).

The Oulton Broad Character Area is covered by the Oulton Broad Conservation Area. A public consultation regarding its future highlights that the Conservation Area faces erosion by the gradual insertion of modern elements which cumulatively could result in the loss of its 19th century character.

A proposed extension to the Conservation Area is currently under consultation to include the Mutford Lock and Nicholas Everitt Park and therefore much more of the landscape identified as port-related in the Oulton Broad Character Area. The extension proposal document states that these areas are 'important...in the historical development of the settlement in relation to former industries' and 'in relation to recreational facilities' (Hogg 2014).

The Shoreline Management Plan 2 provides a long-term risk assessment relating to future coastal evolution and presents a policy framework to address the risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environment in a sustainable manner.

The Shoreline Management Plan covering the Suffolk Coast (SMP2) identifies Lowestoft's port as a key area of industry and commerce. The short, medium and long-term plans are to 'hold the line' of the current sea defences through the maintenance or



Fig 14 The Grade II Listed Port House is located within the North Harbour Character Area and the security fence. It is currently unused and is without plans for its future.

replacement of the current sea walls. This is regarded as economically viable because of the 'large value of assets' that the defences protect. However the reports acknowledges that the character of the beach frontage is likely to change as a result of geological processes and that the longer term plans may need to be reviewed, including a 'managed retreat' of some defences if need be (Environment Agency 2010; Royal Haskoning 2011).

In direct relation to the port, the SMP2 states: "The protection of these developments from erosion and flooding is a major consideration in this unit, in order to ensure the maintenance of industrial and port activities" (Environment Agency 2010).

Heritage risk assessment and opportunities

This Port Heritage Summary has highlighted the essential historic character and heritage assets that underpin Lowestoft's port-related character. Regeneration planning which is informed and inspired by these elements can take a proactive approach to ensure that new developments enhance the distinctiveness and strong 'sense of place' which arise from Lowestoft's historic cultural development rather than developing it as if from a blank canvas. Such culturally-informed regeneration will ultimately be more sustainable for the local community.

The docks and piers within the Outer Harbour - Docks, South Basin and South Pier Character Areas, especially the Hamilton, Waveney and Trawl Docks, are at high risk of change.

The docks and piers form a significant group of heritage assets associated with the 19th and early 20th century expansion of the port, with the work of Peto and the former herring and drift fishing fleets based at the port. However, there could be pressure to redevelop and alter these heritage assets to better accommodate businesses involved in the offshore wind industry. Despite their modern concrete-built outer skin it is likely that they retain elements of their original core. Also, in their layout and extent they still retain their original arrangements.



Fig 15 Looking from the modern sea wall into the Bird's Eye complex with wind turbine in the background.

It is also possible that the Inner Harbour and the quays on its northern side could be redeveloped for use as part of the offshore energy industry. This could require the adaptation and widening of the entrance channel and updating of the bridge to allow larger commercial vessels to use the Inner Harbour. At present, there are no proposals being put forward and therefore the risk cannot be accurately evaluated.

Vulnerable to the storms of the North Sea and to sea level change, it is also possible that the docks and piers will also have to re-enforced to retain their defensive role, protecting the Port of Lowestoft, and the town, from storm surges and swells. The risk is difficult to ascertain as the SMP2 reports make clear, as it is still difficult to accurately predict what might happen in the longer term.

The South Denes and Inner Harbour South Character Areas have been comprehensively redeveloped and their deeper time-depth is not always easy to appreciate. However, it is important that the surviving historic elements that do remain are retained, where possible, in future developments.

In the South Harbour Character Area the quay walls and slipways of the former Brooke Marine ship yard are at moderate risk as they are underused. As some of the last reminders of Lowestoft's former boat building industry, and with a company closely associated with the later development of the port, they have the potential to contribute significantly to the understanding of the port's history and development. In this respect, the dry dock in the Inner Harbour North Character Area also makes a significant contribution. However, it is at low risk, being still used for the maintenance of vessels and functioning as an active part of the port.

The site of the former Sanyo factory in the South Harbour Character Area is awaiting a redevelopment scheme. Occupying part of the site of the former Brooke Marine yard, this is an opportunity to incorporate parts of the yard into future plans, and to help celebrate the role Brooke Marine played in Lowestoft's history.

The Listed Port House, in the North Harbour Character Area, is unused but is in a stable condition and is therefore at moderate risk. No longer used as

part of the port, the sensitive reuse of the building could help secure its long-term future.

The future prosperity of Lowestoft, and the success of its port, is likely to depend on the offshore energy industry or its ability to adapt to other ancillary industries that emerge. As part of driving the economy of the town forward it is also likely that there will be proposals for new road schemes to help link into major road infrastructure. It is possible that this will require the creation of a new bridge across the Inner Harbour.

In the North Denes Character Area the net drying racks are at moderate risk from neglect and decay, especially if there is a lack of funds for local organisations to help maintain them. The information boards that help people to understand the history of the racks, old navigation buoys and anchors are at high risk of vandalism and sadly, many are now illegible.

Lowestoft faces the challenge of retaining its port-related historic character and using its heritage assets to its future advantage.

In this respect the lower Whapload Road part of the Scores and Lighthouse Character Area is currently undervalued in terms of its surviving built heritage, and the contribution it gives to the Lowestoft's story as a port, and therefore is at moderate risk. Here, there are several brick-built net stores and warehouses, associated with the Beach Village and the use of the Denes in the 19th century. However, many are underused or unused and/or cluttered by signage and fencing and often crowded out by neighbouring modern buildings.

Likewise, the Herring and Art trails offer good access to historical information but many of the display boards and installations in the town are damaged or missing, and the associated maps do not seem to be easily available or the trails well-advertised.

There is considerable interest in the town's history with several groups making a significant effort to celebrate and present Lowestoft's story. There is also a large archive of information relating to the harbour, and in particular the vessels that have used the port throughout its history. This is publicly accessible within the Lowestoft Records Office but the information is not widely known or disseminated. The records could be studied and presented as a further asset to the interpretation of the port and the celebration of Lowestoft.

To help better draw out how Lowestoft's heritage could be a driver for regeneration an Extensive Urban Survey assessment for the town could be undertaken. The urban surveys are used to help local authorities, Historic England and others provide heritage information and ideas to help guide future development and support historic environment input into the planning process.

Areas of ground disturbance in certain parts of the Character Areas, in particular within the modern port, could potentially reveal buried archaeological deposits. That potential could be limited, however, by previous substantial ground disturbance such as frequent dredging.

References and further reading

- Ashcroft, N, 2000. The Diminishing Commons: Politics, War and Territorial Waters in the Twentieth Century. In, Starkey, DJ, Reid, C, and Ashcroft, N (eds), 2000. *England's Sea Fisheries: The commercial sea fisheries of England and Wales since 1300*, Chatham Publishing, London
- Butcher, D, 2000 The Herring Fisheries in the Early Modern Period: Lowestoft as Microcosm. In, Starkey, DJ, Reid, C, and Ashcroft, N (eds), 2000. *England's Sea Fisheries: The commercial sea fisheries of England and Wales since 1300*, Chatham Publishing, London
- English Heritage, 2008. *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*, English Heritage, London
- Environment Agency 2010. *North Norfolk Shoreline Management Plan 2*, Final Plan
- Hogg, B, 2014. *Proposed Oulton Broad Conservation Area Public Consultation*, report for Broads Authority Planning Committee
- Malster, R, 1982. *Lowestoft: East coast port*, Terence Dalton Ltd, Lavenham
- Royal Haskoning, 2010. *Lowestoft Ness to Landguard Point SMP2*
- Scott Wilson Ltd and Waveney District Council Conservation Team, 2007a. *North Lowestoft Conservation Area; Character appraisal*, Waveney District Council
- Scott Wilson Ltd and Waveney District Council Conservation Team, 2007b. *South Lowestoft Conservation Area; Character appraisal*, Waveney District Council

Websites

- ABP Lowestoft -
http://www.abports.co.uk/Our_Locations/Short_Sea_Ports/Lowestoft
- BBC News article on Lowestoft -
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-31940483>
- BBC News report on Lowestoft -
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2015-england-32040216>
- Birds Eye webpage -
<http://www.birdseye.co.uk/>
- Birds Eye Wikipedia page -
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birds_Eye
- Brooke Marine Wikipedia page -
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooke_Marine
- Heritage Gateway -
<http://heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway>

- Key to English Place-names -
<http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk>
- The Lowestoft Archaeological and History Society -
<http://www.lowestoftlocalhistory.co.uk>
- Lowestoft Heritage Workshop -
http://www.lowestoftheritage.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10%3Aoutlon-broad-research&catid=3%3Aoutlon-broad&Itemid=24&limitstart=2
- Lowestoft Maritime Museum -
<http://lowestoftmaritimemuseum.org.uk>
- Public Art in Lowestoft -
http://www.publicartonline.org.uk/casestudies/housing/oxbridge/pub_art_lowestoft.php
- Royal Naval Patrol Service Museum -
<http://www.maritimeheritageeast.org.uk/museums/royal-naval-patrol-service-museum>
- Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan 7 -
<http://www.suffolksmp2.org.uk/policy2/smp7index.php?>
- The Suffolk Institute -
<http://www.suffolk institute.org.uk/home>
- Trinity House -
http://www.trinityhouse.co.uk/lighthouses/lighthouse_list/lowestoft.html

Produced for Historic England by Cornwall Archaeological Unit.
www.cau.org.uk