Report 3009

nps archaeology

Archaeological Watching Brief at King's Lynn Academy, Queen Mary Road, Gaywood, Norfolk

ENF128894

Prepared for
Balfour Beatty Construction Ltd

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May 2012

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Location:	Kings' Lynn Academy, Queen Mary Road, Gaywood, Norfolk
District:	Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Grid Ref.:	563270, 320085
Planning Ref.:	Y/2/2011/2026
HER No.:	ENF128894
OASIS Ref.:	125986
Client:	Balfour Beatty Ltd
Dates of Fieldwork:	2 -11 April 2012

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Balfour Beatty Ltd during groundworks associated with redevelopment at King's Lynn Academy.

Monitoring at the site revealed no significant archaeological remains.

Closer examination of 1946-7 aerial photograph of the site cast doubt on the previous interpretation of the cropmarks shown on the photos as ridge and furrow of medieval date. It is considered more likely that the remains represent a post-medieval floated water meadow.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Groundworks associated with redevelopment at King's Lynn Academy in Gaywood, Norfolk (Fig. 1) were archaeologically monitored due to the possibility of the works impacting upon buried archaeological remains. The site was located to the south of the historic core of Gaywood village.

This work was undertaken to fulfil planning requirements set by the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (Ref. Y/2/2011/2026) and planning advice issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service. The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref.NAU/BAU3009/jb). This work was commissioned and funded by Balfour Beatty Ltd.

This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2012). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority about the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by NPS Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAS), following the relevant policies on archiving standards.

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The underlying geology consists of Terrington Beds - clays and silt laid down as coastal mudflats up to two million years ago (BGS 1991) above Upper Jurassic Kimmeridge Clay (BGS 1985).

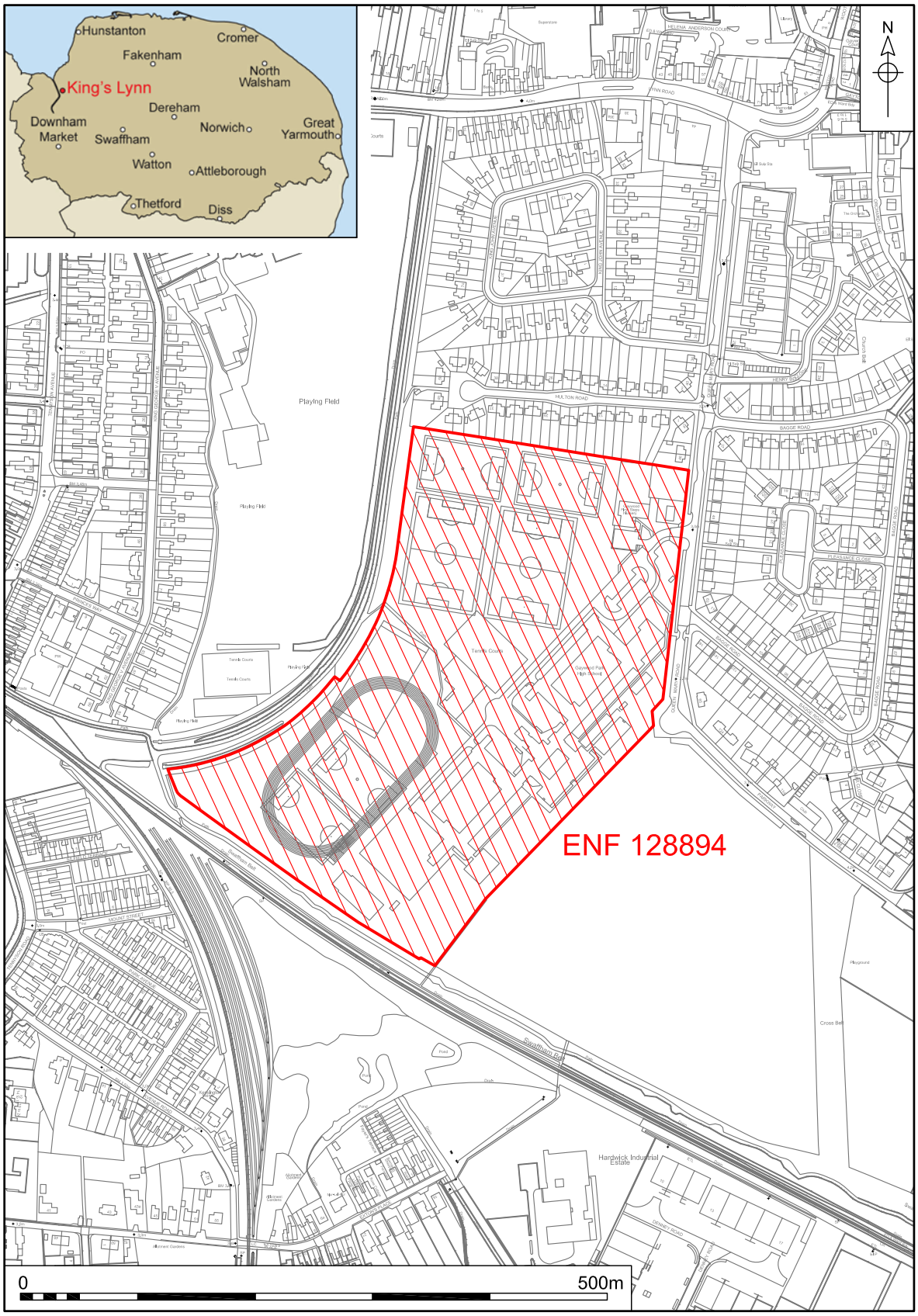

Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

The site lies on flat ground at a height of 2.5-3m OD. The ground level rises notably to the north, towards the historic core of Gaywood village. The area is now surrounded by housing representing the 19th- and 20th-century growth of King's Lynn, but it seems likely that before this date the area had been marshy.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A desk-based assessment for this site has been prepared within the last twelve months (Sillwood 2011).The conclusions of that study are reiterated below:

> This site has the potential for archaeology relating to past agricultural activity of medieval to post-medieval date to be present, with two sites recorded either side of the school.
>
> Gaywood developed as an outlying village to the town of King's Lynn in the early medieval period, being mentioned in Domesday as rather a prosperous place with many more salterns and mills than Lynn itself at that time. As Bishop's Lynn developed so Gaywood's individual identity began to be absorbed and it became a suburb of the town, although this didn't happen fully until at least the Victorian period. Settlement was concentrated in an area located to the north of the development site, along the main road from Lynn and near to the church. The area where the school now stands is likely to have always been pasture or meadow from the medieval period until the school was constructed in the 1930s.
>
> It is considered that any impact on the archaeological resource that may be caused by the development could be mitigated by a programme of archaeological work and there is nothing in this report that would suggest that the development could not proceed (Sillwood 2011, 34).

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence or absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that groundworks be archaeologically monitored (Fig. 2).

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

Environmental samples were not taken.

Archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NPS Archaeology pro forma. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Digital photographs were taken of relevant features and deposits.

Site conditions were variable, with work undertaken in both fine weather and torrential rain.

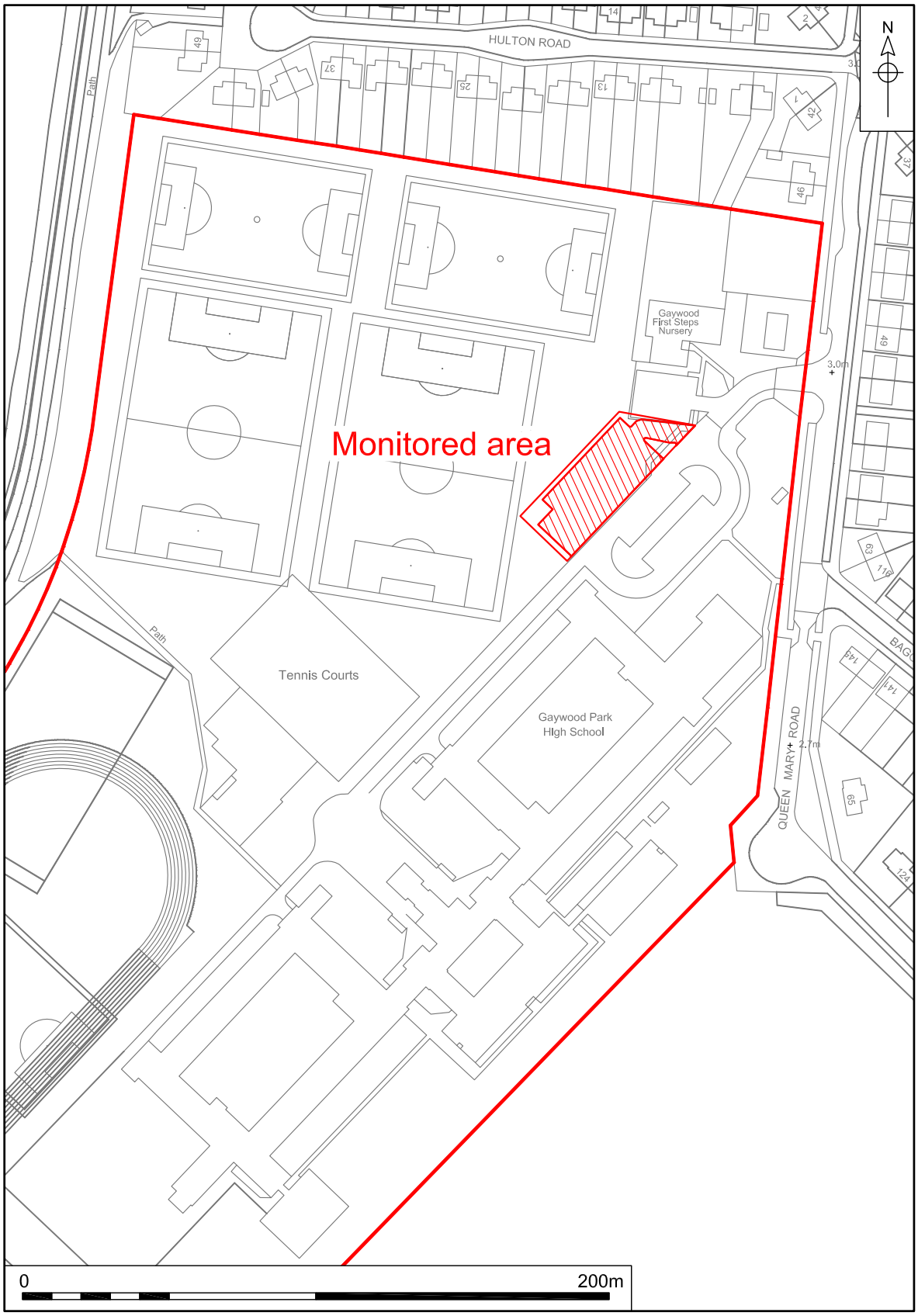

Figure 2. Location of monitored area. Scale 1:2000

5.0 RESULTS

The extension to the car park by the entrance onto Queen Mary Road was monitored (Fig. 2, Plate 1) This was an area that measured approximately 20m x 60m and was excavated to a depth of c.0.6m.

Plate 1. The monitored area under excavation

Plate 2. The stratigraphy, showing topsoil and the Terrington Beds

The stratigraphy encountered consisted of topsoil (1) to a depth of 0.25m below ground level. This was a mid greyish brown silt with occasional flint gravel.

Below the topsoil was a pale brownish grey silt with occasional flint gravel and marine mollusc shell (Plate 2). This deposit was interpreted as part of the Terrington Beds, the upper geological strata in the area (Section 2 above).

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

This project recovered no archaeological features or artefacts.

The presence of a grey hued silt with marine mollusc shells below the topsoil, suggests that this area was marsh until quite recently. This deposit is probably the Terrington Beds, a geological deposit laid down from 2,000,000 years ago until the post-medieval period, as a mud flat or coastal marsh deposit.

The 1946-7 aerial photograph (http://historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk) shows cropmarks over the whole school site, suggesting ridge and furrow, but on closer examination they were considered more like floated water meadow remains. The purpose of floated water meadow was to cover pasture with moving water during the winter, warming the ground and reducing the risk of freezing, thus providing earlier spring growth (Cushion and Davison 2003, 187). This would enable cattle to graze earlier in the year, and so be ready for market before conventionally-fed cattle could be.

The Norfolk Historic Environment Record holds two records of sites of ridge and furrow earthworks adjacent to the Academy grounds (NHER 37679 to the north-east and NHER 38303 to the south-east) but examination of the 1946-7 aerial photographs shows that these two areas appear to be part of the same floated water meadow system seen on the Academy's playing fields. Examination of this aerial photograph seems to show a series of features which at first glance appear to be a system of strips and furlongs, but closer examination shows detail differences which cannot work as ridge and furrow. Each individual 'strip' (orientated north to south) is surrounded by a ditch-like feature and is further subdivided (again north to south) by smaller ditch-like features. There are a number of larger ditch-like features running east to west located where, in a ridge and furrow system, headlands would be present, and which would be upstanding earthworks. In the 1946-7 photograph though, they appear to be ditches.

It seems likely that the water meadow at the Academy site was supplied with water from the Middleton Stop Drain (to the south) which was diverted into the main east to west aligned channels and then into the smaller north to south aligned channels - which would have been shallower and controlled by sluices, and which would be allowed to overflow and cover the grassland between. The author believes that because of the water-logged nature of the land in the Academy site, this area was most likely to have been rough pasture in the medieval period rather than arable ridge and furrow, which is more likely to have been present on drier land to the north.

A functioning water meadow is not shown on the historic mapping, but the field boundaries shown on the 1838 Tithe Map (Sillwood 2011, fig.10) follow the line of the water channels, and appear on the map to actually be water channels; the

detail of the system is not shown. The Tithe Award lists the fields within the Academy area as meadow and pasture and it is likely that the expansion of the park belonging to Gaywood Hall to the east, into the area of the Academy in the 19th century may have brought a halt to the operation of the water meadow. Other floated water meadows in Norfolk have been dated to the late 18th or early 19th century (Cushion and Davison 2003, 190 (Lynford and Buckenham Tofts), 193 (Castle Acre), 197 (West Lexham - constructed 1803-6),198 (West Tofts).

The apparent absence of water meadow remains in the area that was archaeologically monitored appears to be a result of the combination of the difficulty of seeing such features against the greyish brown silt of the Terrington Beds, adverse site conditions (very wet and muddy, with standing water) and the use of a toothed bucket by the excavator.

Further fieldwork in the area and documentary research may uncover more details of the construction and use of this floated water meadow system.

Acknowledgements

Thanks must be given to Bob Beadle of Balfour Beatty Ltd for his help and cooperation. Balfour Beatty Ltd commissioned and funded the work.

The author would like to thank Andy Barnett for monitoring most of the groundworks, the remainder were monitored by the author.

This report was illustrated and produced by David Dobson and edited by Jayne Bown.

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Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period
1	Deposit			Topsoil	-