

# **NAU ARCHAEOLOGY**

Report No. 1108

## **An Archaeological Watching Brief at King's Lynn Railway Station, King's Lynn, Norfolk.**

HER No: 42609 KLY

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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:10,000

**Local Authority No.100019340**

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Location: King's Lynn Railway Station.  
District: West Norfolk  
Grid Ref: TF 62428 20011  
Her No: 42609 KLY  
Date of fieldwork: 7th to 19th October 2005

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in advance of a Walkers Construction/WAGN car park extension, at the railway station at King's Lynn, Norfolk.*

*The watching brief recorded no archaeologically significant remains or contexts in either the topsoil cleared for the extension itself, or in any of the trenches excavated for the installation of services. Few artefacts were found, although several intact modern glass and ceramic bottles were recovered from surface clearance.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU) during the construction of a new car park extension, including the excavation of an associated service trench (total length 110m) and wall foundation trench (length 6.50m) at King's Lynn Railway Station, Norfolk. A surface clearance of topsoil (51 by 52m) was also monitored.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology. (NLA Ref: ER/1/9/05)

The site archive is currently held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

## **2.0 Geology and Topography**

(Figure 1)

King's Lynn overlies a complex sequence of geological deposits, made up of marine clays, sands and peat. The town is located in west Norfolk lowland, with the lower marshland to the west, and the settlement areas defined by four major streams running into the Ouse, the Nar, Purfleet, Millfleet, and the Gaywood River to the north. The geology within the area of the watching brief consists of a dark heavy soil, which overlies a mixed natural of blue grey Boulder clay (Funnel 1994,18).

The site was located between the railway itself and the recreation ground, with the Gaywood River situated between the two areas of excavation. The river bank and west edge of Area 1 was slightly raised due to the past deposition of river dredged material at this point. Area 2 was the main station car park situated along the southern side of the railway station, with access to the west from Blackfriars Road.

### 3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The occupation of King's Lynn seems originally to have its roots in the salt workings that occurred along the estuary banks, where the towns' rivers emptied into the Wash. Trade in salt from this area was well established by the 11th century. The town continued to grow, with increasing connections through its waterborne trade well into the medieval period, when the slowing of agricultural expansion resulted in a decline in exports.

The Railway station in its present brick form was constructed in 1877, and provided a direct connection with London and the surrounding area through a number of branch lines. The area of the site was at this time in use as a railway siding, which fell out of use as the branch lines were abandoned during the 1960's. The area between the railway and the recreation ground was then given over to allotments.

### 4.0 Methodology

The brief required an archaeologist to be in constant attendance at the site during any below surface excavation and stripping, in order to record any archaeological remains that may have been uncovered by these works. At the time the brief was issued, the depth of the service trenches was to be 0.90m. This depth was reduced during the watching brief to 0.60m, in order to avoid existing services.

**Area 1** constituted the area of trees and topsoil to be cleared in order for the new car park surface to be constructed. This area (51m by 52m) was to be built up, rather than reduced, resulting in a shallow (0.50m) topsoil clearance using a hydraulic 360° excavator. This stripping was to be monitored only.

**Area 2** constituted the existing station front car park, where a long service trench, and shorter wall foundation trench, were to be excavated. The foundation trench (Trench 01) was excavated using a JCB type machine with a 0.50m toothed ditching bucket, to a depth of 0.70m, for a length of 6.50m.

The service trench (Trench 02) was excavated with the same machine, for a length of 110m. The starting depth was 0.90m; this was revised to 0.60m.

Any archaeological remains in these trenches were to be recorded.

The spoil and the stripped area (Area 1) were not metal detected, due to a very high frequency of railway related scrap metal throughout the upper surface of these areas. A sample of items, although modern, was collected by hand.

All deposits were recorded using the NAU *pro forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

No environmental samples were taken due to a lack of suitable deposits.

A level was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark of 5.12m on the South east corner of King's Lynn railway station front entrance building. This mark was 0.70m above the car park surface, into which trenches 1 and 2 were cut.

Site conditions were good, with clear access to and from the site. The weather was generally sunny, with some overcast days.

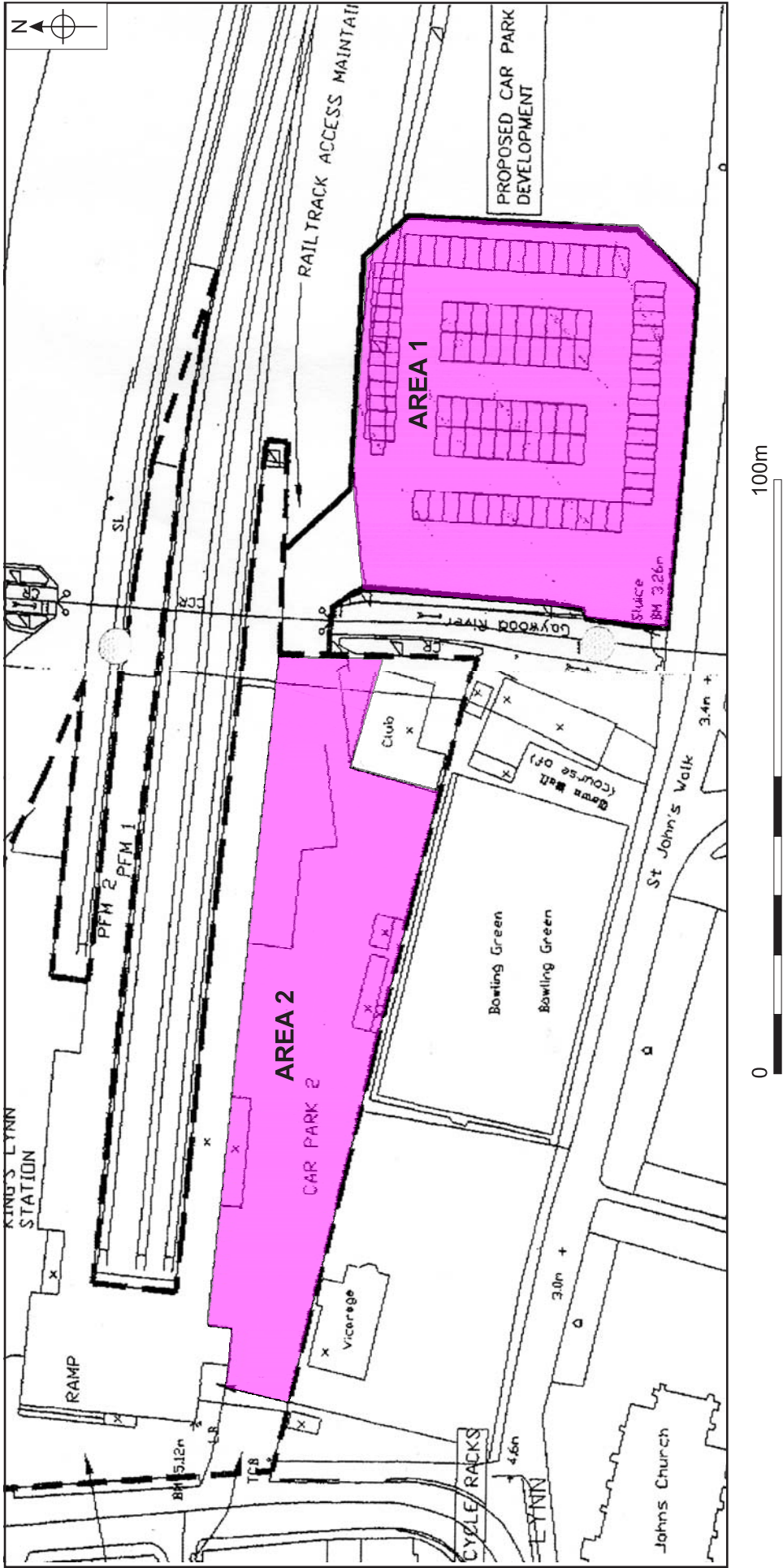


Figure 2. Location of areas 1 and 2. Scale 1:1000



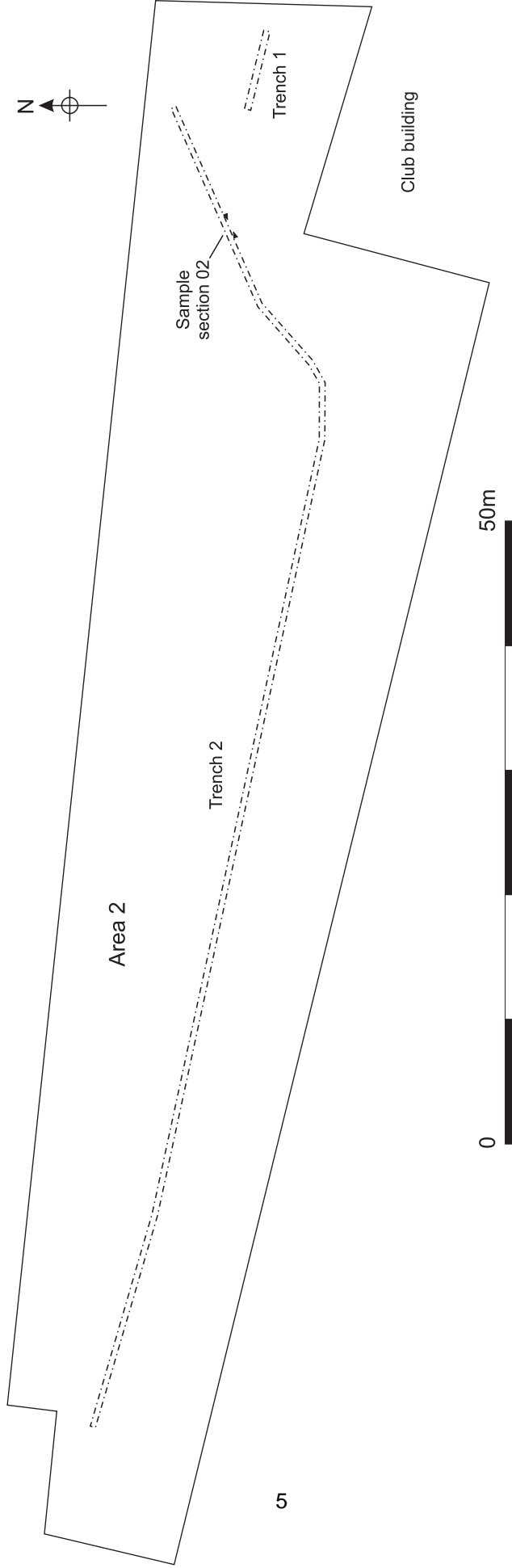


Figure 3. Service trench location plan. Scale 1:500

## 5.0 Results

(Figures 2, 3 and 4; Appendix 1)

### Area 1

(Fig. 2)

The topsoil ([05]) in this area was stripped to a depth measuring between 0.40 and 0.50m, and consisted of a rich dark brown silty loam, which contained frequent tree roots, occasional small angular stones, scrap metal fragments (railway related) and a number of ceramic and glass bottles (Modern). There were also a number of modern red bricks and brick fragments, but no evidence of any in situ, or of any structural foundations. This topsoil layer was excavated to the allocated specific depth, and did not reveal any further contexts beneath.

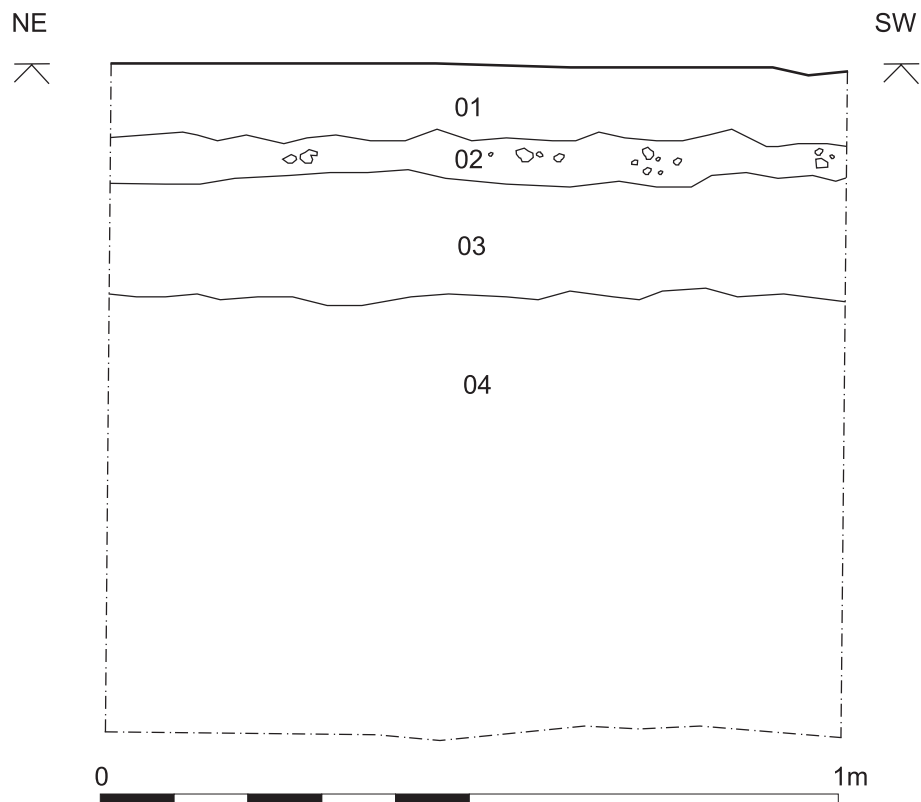


Figure 4. Sample section of service trench. Scale 1:10

### Area 2

(Fig.2)

Trenches 1 and 2 were both cut through the surface of the existing car park. The upper surface ([01]) was a double thickness of asphalt (0.10m) over a thin layer of tarmac ([02]), which was 0.06m thick. Beneath these was a layer of 0.13m thick Type 1 sub-base ([03]) below, which was a 0.61m thick layer of brownish yellow sand. ([04]) The deepest point of Trench 2 was 0.90m. This depth was reduced after approx. 10m, to a depth of 0.60m for the rest of the trench. This was due to the

discovery of previously unexpected services, including lighting cables and sewage pipes. The extent of the depth of the sand ([04]) was not discovered. These contexts continued for the length of Trenches 1 and 2, while existing services encountered were not recorded.

No archaeological remains were found.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

No archaeological features were recorded in Area 1, due to the shallow depth required for the stripping and vegetation clearance. Surface finds of scrap metal remain from the use of the northern edge as a railway siding, while the bottles and glass are debris left from the areas' previous use as allotments.

No archaeological evidence or features were recorded in Area 2. The ground below the surface was all made-ground, which was in turn frequently disturbed by modern services. The brownish sand appeared to be a type common on the Carstone and Boulder clay, and contained no archaeological features. The reduction in the depth of the trenches from 0.90m to 0.60m also considerably reduced the chances of finding anything other than modern deposition.

## ***Acknowledgements***

The author would like to thank all at Walker Construction for their help during the project, and all NAU staff who assisted in the production of this report. The report was illustrated by Julie Curl and David Dobson and edited and produced by Julie Curl.

## ***Bibliography***

Funnel, B., 1994 'Recent Geology' in Wade-Martins, P., (ed) *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk*, Norfolk Museums Service



**Appendix 1: Context Summary**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Period</b>
01	Deposit	Asphalt	Post-Med.
02	Deposit	Tarmac	Post-Med.
03	Deposit	Sub base	Post-Med.
04	Deposit	Brownish sand	Post-Med.
05	Deposit	Topsoil	Post-Med.