

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 1109

**An Archaeological Evaluation at 1 Sir Lewis Street,
King's Lynn, Norfolk**

42012 KLY

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Location: 1 Sir Lewis Street, King's Lynn
District: West Norfolk
Grid Ref: TF 6199 2071
HER No.: 42012 KLY
Date of fieldwork: 29th and 30th September 2005

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 1 Sir Lewis Street, King's Lynn in advance of proposed development of the site. The site lay within the town's post-medieval defences and close to one of the internal bastions. No evidence for archaeological features, deposits or artefacts was found.

1.0 Introduction

(Fig. 1)

The site was in an area of proposed development at 1 Sir Lewis Street, King's Lynn (Fig. 1). The development area measured 160 sq. m.

The work was commissioned by Matt Sturgeon Building Consultant and funded by Alistair Roberts.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU Ref: AS/1725) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: AH/31/12/03).

The 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 *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 — Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

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

A complex sequence of recent geological deposits made-up of marine clays, silts, sands and peats up to about 10m thick, underlies the whole of King's Lynn and the surrounding area. All of this former marshland has been reclaimed from salt marsh within historic times. The earliest reclamations probably date from the mid-to-late Saxon period. These reclaimed salt marsh deposits are soft reddish-brown clays with silt laminae, generally 1 to 2m thick. Within them lies a complex network of silt filled channels, the remains of a former pattern of tidal creeks (which may be the precursors of some minor fleets within the town). Peat occurs as a continuous layer, generally less than 1m thick, beneath the reclaimed salt marsh deposits. It is soft, composed largely of reed, and beneath the King's Lynn area is usually woody. The four major streams flowing into the Ouse, The River Nar, Millfleet, Purfleet and the Gaywood River to the north, came to define the extent of the several settlements and extensions to the town.

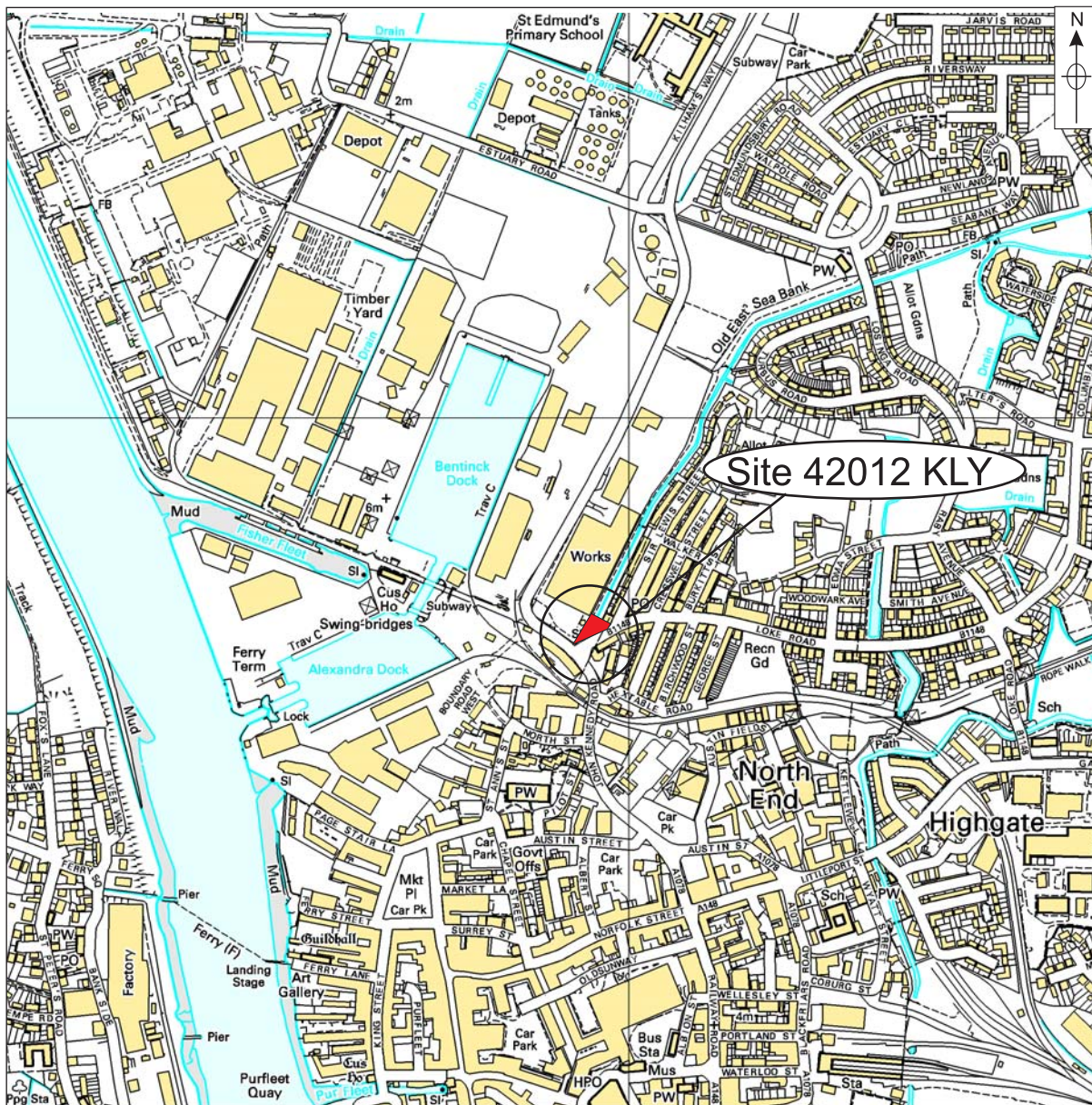


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:10,000

Local Authority No.100019340

Fig. 1 is based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office © Crown Copyright 'Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings' Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Norwich (05/01/05). Reference copy: no further copies to be made.

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3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site of the proposed development lies within the town's defences, which here date to the 1640s. One of the internal bastions lay some 70m east of the proposed development. The Fisher Fleet is to the south, and a stronghold marked as 'Block House' by Faden (1797) is located to the south-east. The site is immediately west of a former encircling arm of the Fisher Fleet. Casual discoveries in Pilot Street (Norfolk Historic Environment Record 1151KLY), to the south of the former fleet have produced 17th-century pottery and a 13th or 14th century stone mortar. Fishponds to the north of the site are marked on Faden (1797). An archaeological evaluation undertaken in 2002 at 53-57 Sir Lewis Street failed to record any archaeological features, deposits or artefacts.

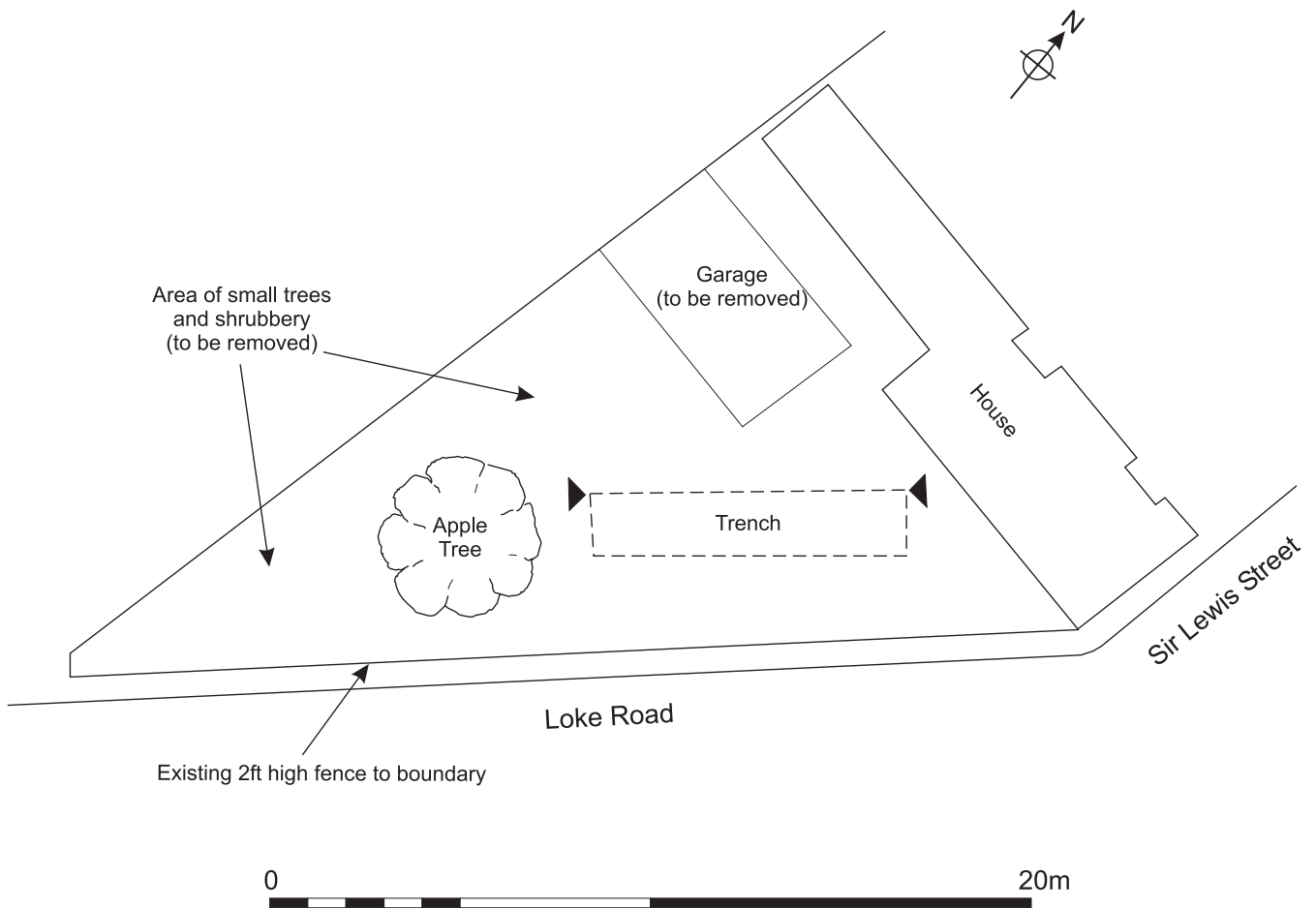


Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:200

4.0 Methodology

(Fig. 2)

The objective of this evaluation 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 a single trench be to be excavated across the site at a right angle to the line of the defences. A trench that measured 8m in length and 1.80m in width was excavated (Fig. 2). The trench was machine excavated to a depth of 0.70m. Three 0.60m deep hand-excavated sondages were placed at regular intervals along the trench giving a total investigated depth of 1.30m.

Access to the site was restricted to a small gateway leading into the garden. This necessitated the use of a micro hydraulic 360° excavator for excavation of the evaluation trench. Machine excavation was carried out using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

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

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using 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.

A temporary benchmark was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark of 5.11m at 22b Lansdowne Street to a non-permanent peg with a value of 5.02m on site.

Due to the lack of suitable deposits, no environmental samples were taken.

The evaluation trench was located in a grassed area within the garden attached to No 1 Sir Lewis Street. Overgrown shrubs and trees around the trench made the storage of spoil problematic. The site was bordered by the house of the property on the north side and Loke Road on the east and south sides. A high wooden fence enclosed the site.

5.0 Results

(Fig. 3)

The earliest deposit recorded was a firmly compacted orange silt layer ([04]). This was located at a depth of 1.25m below the present ground surface to the base of each hand-excavated sondage. Above layer [04] was evidence of a further episode of silting represented by a 0.70m depth of mid orange brown silt ([03]). Both of these deposits ([04] and [03]) represent marine silts and contained small quantities of shell fragments and small stones. At the south-west end of the trench a depression to the top of silt layer ([03]) contained a compacted deposit of light grey fine sand ([02]) that measured 0.15m in depth. This is probably the result of a faster flowing stream channel that perhaps flowed across a marshy area after the cessation of marine conditions. Deposit [02] was sealed by topsoil ([01]) that consisted of mid grey silt. The topsoil had occasional inclusions of modern brick and tile fragments. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded in the trench.

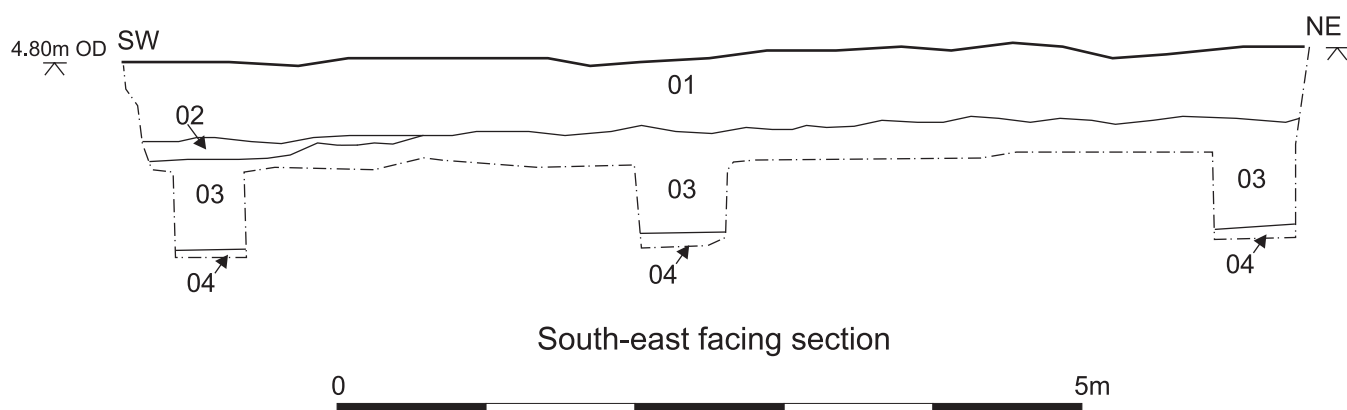


Figure 3. Trench section. Scale 1:50

6.0 Conclusions

No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified during the evaluation work.

Norfolk Landscape Archaeology will make recommendations for future work based upon this report.

Acknowledgements

Gary Trimble undertook the fieldwork and writing of the report. Alice Lyons edited the report. Julie Curl illustrated and produced the report.

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Category	Description	Period
01	Deposit	Mid grey silt topsoil	Modern
02	Deposit	Light grey fine sand	
03	Deposit	Mid orange brown silt	
04	Deposit	Light orange silt	