

Report 2408



nau archaeology

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at  
58/59 Norfolk Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk**

ENF124592



Prepared for  
Wyatt Builders Ltd.



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July 2010



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Location:	58/59 Norfolk Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk
District:	Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Grid Ref.:	TF 6213 2025
HER No.:	ENF124592
OASIS Ref.:	79673
Client:	Wyatt Builders Ltd.
Dates of Fieldwork:	13-14 May 2010

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Wyatt Builders Ltd during the sinking of piles connected with the development of a plot of land at Norfolk Street, King's Lynn.*

*Two layers were encountered, the lowest of which (c.2-3m below ground level) yielded one sherd of late 17th-century pottery. No evidence was found of either the adjacent medieval fish-hook manufactory (NHER 31393) or of the medieval hospital of St John (NHER 5487) thought to have been on this site. Furthermore no evidence of the causeway upon which Norfolk Street may have been located was present.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Redevelopment of a vacant plot on the south side of Norfolk Street (Fig. 1) by Wyatt Builders Ltd, within the historic core of King's Lynn, necessitated a programme of watching brief monitoring. Although the impact of the development was minimised by the use of piles rather than strip foundations, it was considered that the importance of archaeological remains in the close vicinity required an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during the piling operation.

This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (Ref. 09/01146/F). The work was conducted in accordance with an approved Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. BAU2408). This work was funded by Wyatt Builders Ltd.

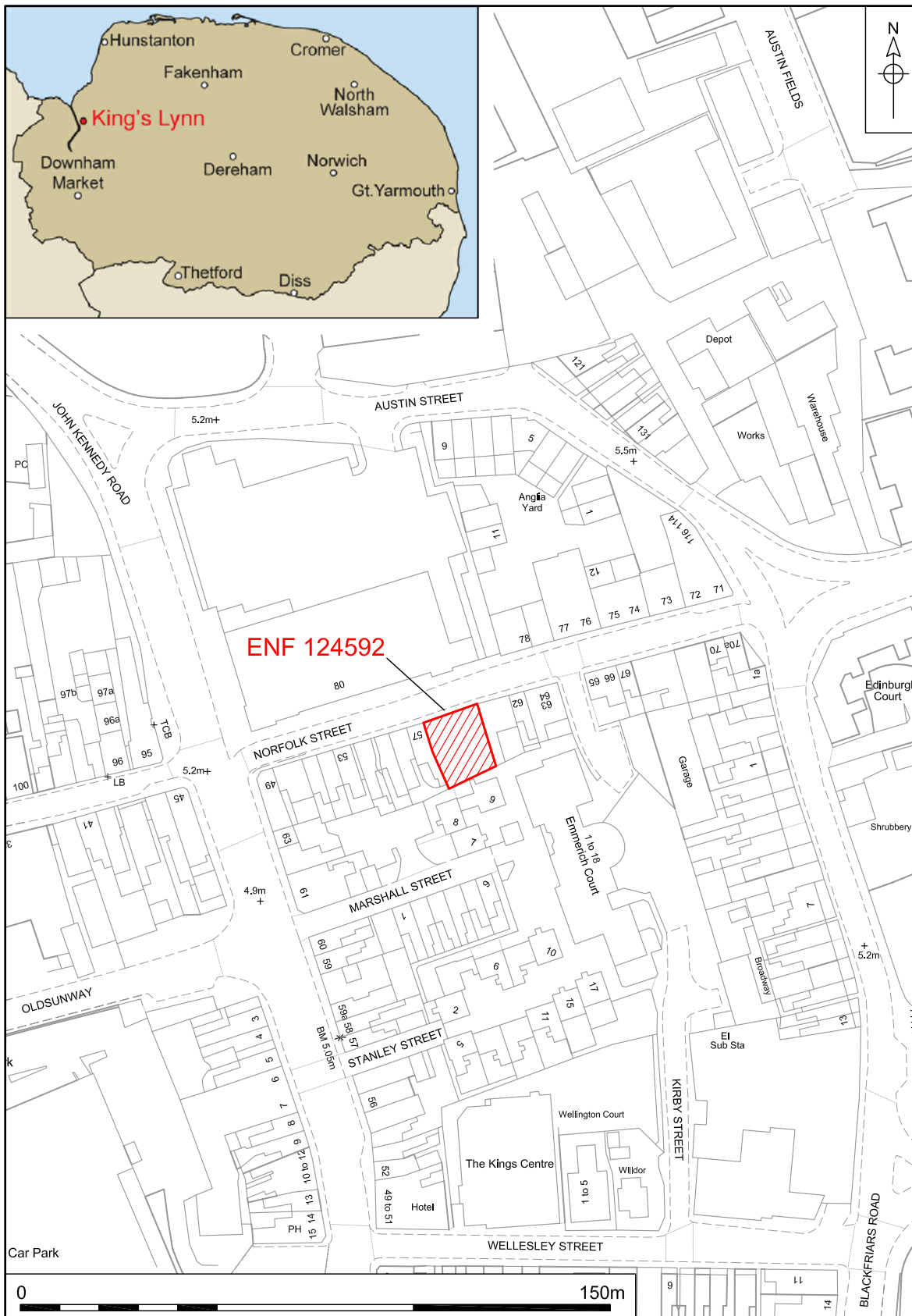
This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990).

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

## **2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The site lies upon deposits of Flandrian alluvium lying above undifferentiated West Walton, Ampthill and Kimmeridge clay (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience>). The alluvium is a complex sequence of marine clays, sands and peats up to 10m thick. The entire area was once marshland with creeks and streams. The road

from Lynn to Gaywood (of which Norfolk Street is a part) was constructed on a causeway (Penn 2008, 2).



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:1500

The site lies within the historic core of the town of King's Lynn, on flat ground at a height of c.5m OD.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Norfolk Historic Environment Record and cartographic sources have been consulted in the preparation of this section.

The present development site lies within an area occupied by the site of the medieval hospital of St John which was founded before 1135 and dissolved in 1545 (NHER 5487). After the Dissolution the site was redeveloped along the course of what is now Norfolk Street. Structures occupying 51 to 53 Norfolk Street date from the early 17th century and were originally houses and shops. There was also a late 17th-century shop with later alterations at 61 Norfolk Street.

Detailed archaeological investigations have taken place across the road from the present site at 74-78 Norfolk Street (NHER 31393), revealing extensive evidence of medieval and post-medieval occupation and industrial activities. Several structures were excavated including a blacksmith's workshop and evidence of other medieval industries was recovered. The evidence found here relating to fish-hook manufacture between 1250 and 1350 AD is considered to be of international significance.

The building at 69 Norfolk Street (NHER 22988) was originally a 16th- or 17th-century inn (now converted to a restaurant) that is depicted on 17th- and 18th-century maps of the town.

Norfolk Street formed part of a causeway linking the town centre to the Gayton Road in the medieval period (Penn 2008)

Faden's map of 1797 (Barringer 1989) shows buildings fronting on to Norfolk Street in the area of the present development.

### **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, given the limitations that monitoring piling works entails.

The Brief required that the piling be monitored.

The piles were drilled to a depth of c.9m before the drill was extracted and the hole filled with concrete and steel reinforcing. Soil arisings from the pile cores were scanned visually and metal detected to extract any artefacts that may have been present.

All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection.

No environmental samples were taken.

Site conditions were good, with the work taking place in fine weather.



## 5.0 RESULTS

A total of 20 piles were sunk under archaeological supervision to a depth of c.9m. The piles were dug using a 200mm diameter borer and concrete immediately poured as the drill was extracted. The spoil from each pile core was visually checked and scanned with a metal detector.

The stratigraphy of all 20 piles was found to be identical. Two layers were identified; the lowest (2) was a dark grey waterlogged clay with peaty lenses containing a very small number of twig and peg tile fragments and occasional pieces of fine gravel. One sherd of pottery of late 17th-century date was retrieved.

Above layer (2) was layer (1) a deposit of mid brown clay c.2-3m deep containing very few pieces of ceramic building material and fragments of plaster of 19th- and 20th-century date.



Plate 1. The piling operation in progress, facing north

## 6.0 THE FINDS

A single sherd of late 17th-century slipware was recovered from layer (2). The sherd has dark orange fabric with pale brown slip and yellow trailed decoration and may be from a bowl or dish. Local slipwares are found in Kings Lynn and were produced at kiln sites in West Norfolk (Clarke and Carter 1977, fig.118). However the red orange fabric of these locally-made products is hard to distinguish from other slipwares such as Metropolitan Ware and therefore a more precise source of this sherd remains uncertain.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The same sequence of deposits was observed from each of the boreholes monitored i.e. 2-3m of relatively sterile mid brown clay overlying a dark grey waterlogged clay with peaty lenses which contained a few waterlogged twigs.

No evidence of archaeological features or remains including those of either the adjacent medieval fish-hook manufactory (NHER 31393) or of the medieval hospital of St John (NHER 5487) thought to have been on this site. Furthermore no evidence of the causeway upon which Norfolk Street may have been located was found.

## **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank William Bunting of Wyatt Builders Ltd for his engagement with the project and for commissioning the work on behalf of Wyatt Builders Ltd who also funded this work, and to the onsite subcontractors for their cooperation. Sarah Percival processed, examined and reported on the finds, while the illustrations were completed by David Dobson. The project was managed by Jayne Bown who also edited the report.

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<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience> consulted 15 June 2010

### Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period
1	Deposit	-	-	mid brown clay with rare CBM fragments	Undated
2	Deposit	-	-	Dark grey waterlogged clay with peaty bits, rare wood, occasional fine gravel and rare peg tile fragments	Undated

### Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period	Notes
2	Pottery	1	7g	Post-medieval	C17th Slipware

### Appendix 2b: OASIS Finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Post-medieval	Pottery	1