

Report 2008



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**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
The Old Chapel, John Kennedy Road,
King's Lynn, Norfolk**

NHER ENF124836



Prepared for
Colin Dawson Windows Ltd.
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John Kennedy Road
Kings Lynn
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Plate 1. A view of the site, looking north-east

Location: The Old Chapel, John Kennedy Road, King's Lynn
District: King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Grid Ref.: TF 6197 2061
HER No.: ENF124836
OASIS Ref.: 82354
Client: Colin Dawson Windows Ltd.
Dates of Fieldwork: 15 June 2010

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Colin Dawson Windows Ltd. ahead of the construction of new housing adjacent to the Old Chapel, John Kennedy Road., King's Lynn. Foundations for only one of the proposed buildings were excavated at this time, construction of the remaining buildings having been postponed for an indefinite period. The brick foundations of late post-medieval buildings were identified in three places, and a large pit containing medieval pottery was identified at the western end of the new foundation trenches.

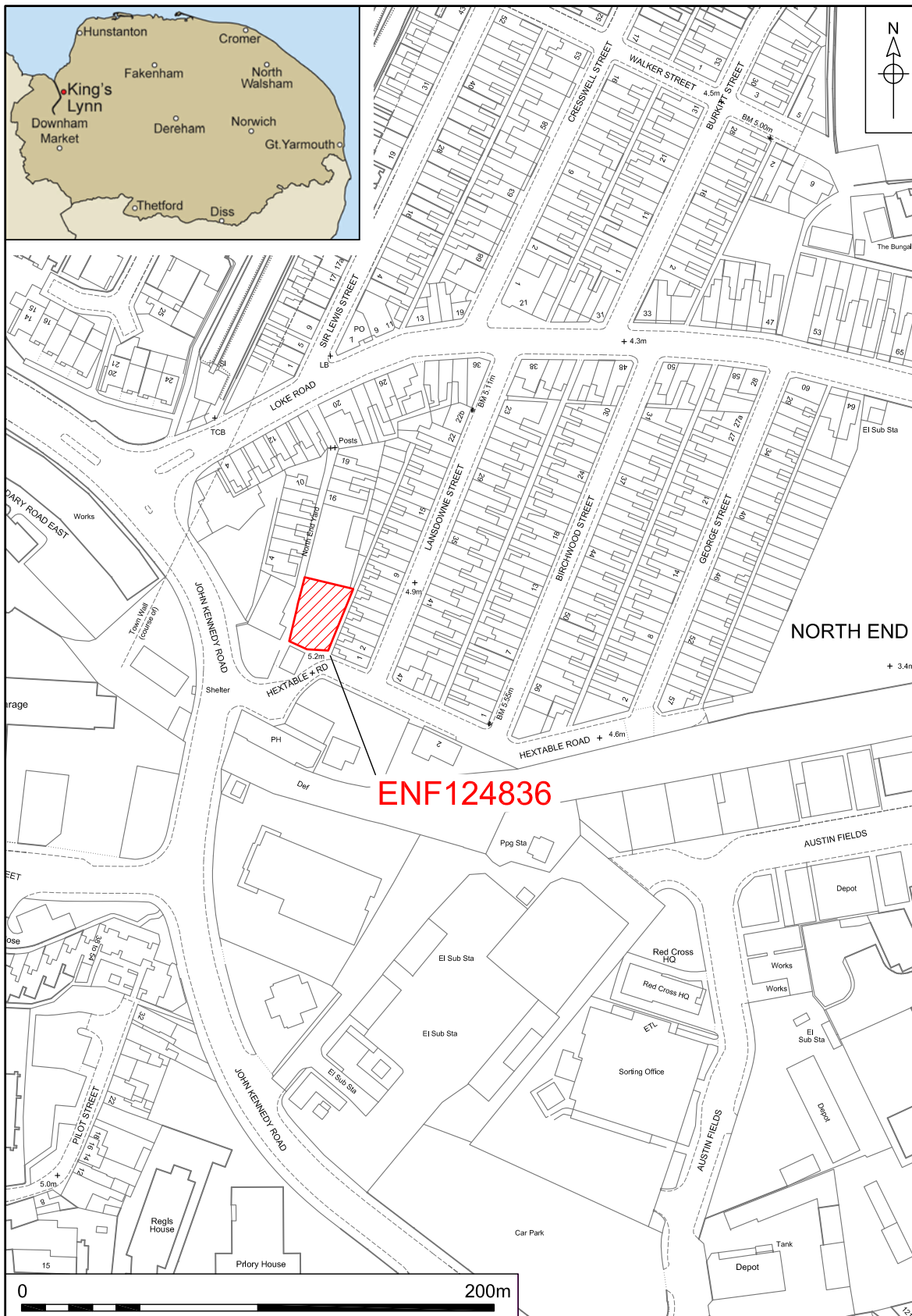
1.0 INTRODUCTION

On 15 June 2010, NAU Archaeology carried out a watching brief on the excavation of foundations for one new residential building on a plot to the rear of Ladbrokes betting shop, on the corner of John Kennedy Road and Hextable Road, King's Lynn (Figs 1 and 2, Plate 1). Planning permission has been granted for the construction of several buildings on this plot and it is expected that work will continue on the site at some point in the future. This report concerns the results of work to construct the first building only.

The work was commissioned and funded by Colin Dawson Windows Ltd. of King's Lynn and was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (Ref. 07/00649/F) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (Ref. CNF41234). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. BAU2008).

The 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 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 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.



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2500

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

King's Lynn is built on marshland, the landscape that also typifies Norfolk to the west of the town. Gault clays form the soil typology to the east. During the Roman period it is likely that all or much of the land that King's Lynn is constructed on would have been underwater and even today, much of it is low lying e.g. this site at John Kennedy Road is at approximately 5.3m OD.

Prior to construction work beginning on the site the plot had been used as a car park and the ground surface was gravelled.

Drainage of the site is not particularly good. The upper deposits were fairly dry and compact but layers towards the bottom of the trenches were wet and waterlogged with the easternmost trench filling with water immediately after excavation.

The site is located just 550m east of the Great Ouse River and just 250m and 280m (respectively) from the Alexandra and Bentinck docks.

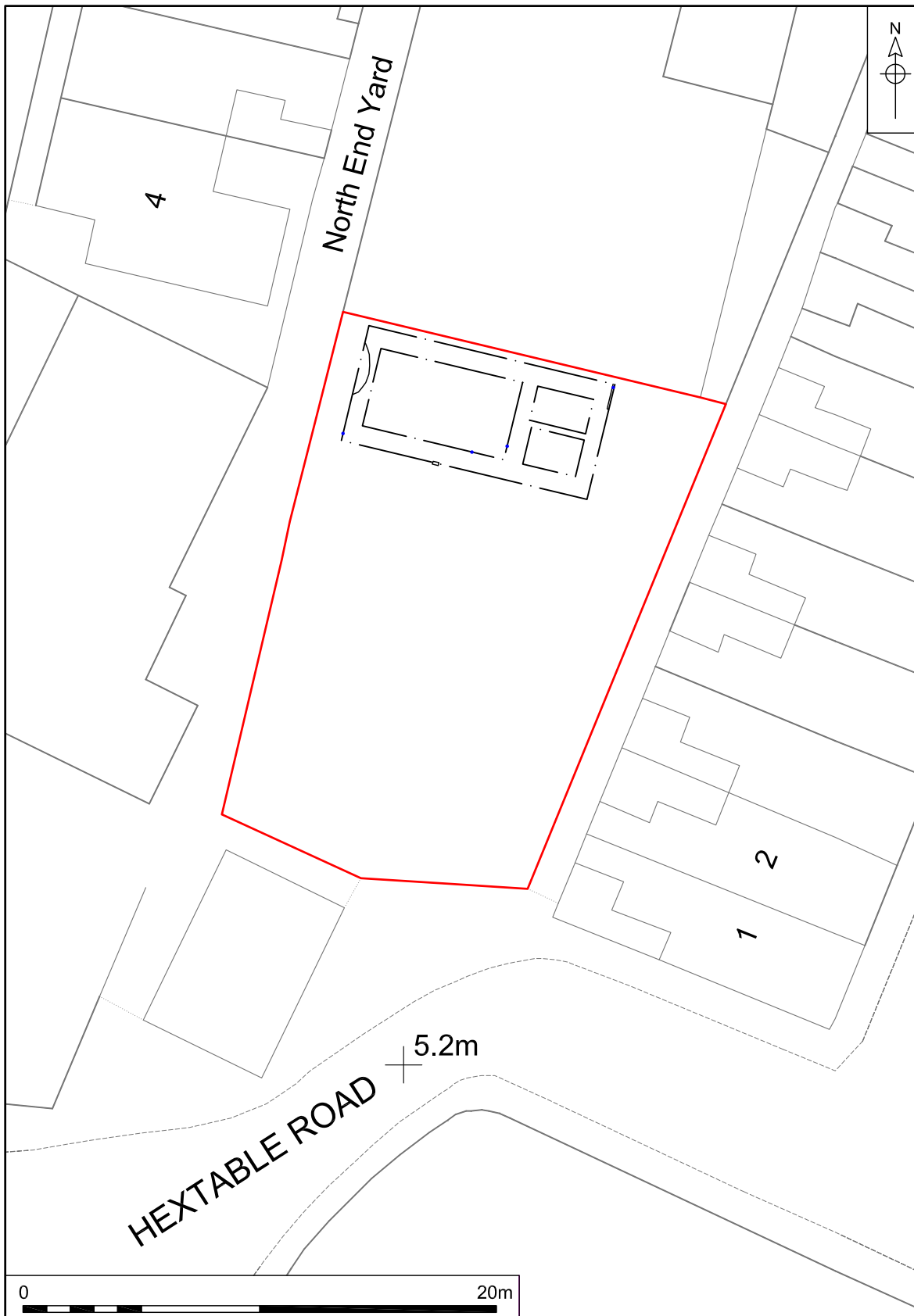
3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies within the area defined by the medieval walls around King's Lynn and is in a historic area for which there are numerous Historic Environment Records (NHER). The town walls themselves (NHER 5486) date to the late 13th and early 14th centuries.

Remains of a medieval building (NHER 49124) have been recovered to the immediate south-east of the current site (on the opposite side of Hextable Road), and a medieval to post-medieval bridge (NHER 40068) has been identified approx. 60m to the south-west. There are a number of extant medieval buildings 130m-350m to the south-west of the site including St Nicholas' Chapel (NHER 5549) (founded in 1146 and rebuilt in the 13th and early 15th centuries), the remains of a 15th-century Augustinian Friary (NHER 1025), properties at 2 and 4-6 St Ann's Street (NHER 22264), 14-18 St Ann's Street (NHER 12596), 30-32 Pilot Street (NHER 1111) and St Nicholas Street (NHER 12598).

True's Yard (NHER 24426), a group of brick buildings 150m to the south-west of the development site, dates from the 18th to early 19th century and is the last surviving example of a fisherman's yard in an area that was once a thriving fishing community.

Cartographic and photographic evidence for the site was consulted but neither Faden's 1797 map of Norfolk (Barringer 1989), Bryant's map of 1826 (Barringer 1998), or the Tithe map of Gaywood parish show any buildings on the site. However the first edition Ordnance Survey map of King's Lynn and an RAF aerial photograph from 1946 both show terraced housing in this location. These are likely to have been Victorian and it seems reasonable to assume that the brick foundations uncovered during the archaeological work are the remains of these buildings. They were subject to a clearance order in 1958 and demolished. Photographs from the 1988 aerial survey commissioned by Norfolk County Council Department of Planning and Property suggest that the plot has remained empty since the demolition of those buildings.



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Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:250

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this Watching Brief was to mitigate the impacts of the proposed works in line with the Archaeological Brief. Where archaeological remains are identified and cannot be preserved *in situ*, the potential impact of the scheme is to be minimised by appropriate levels of archaeological excavation and recording (preservation by record)

Machine excavation was carried out with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Photographs were taken of relevant features and deposits. All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NAU Archaeology pro forma.

All 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.



Plate 2 A view of the westernmost trench, looking north

5.0 RESULTS

The foundations of only one of the proposed residential buildings were excavated, construction of the rest of the scheme having been postponed to a later date. The brick foundations of late post-medieval buildings were identified in three places, and a large pit containing medieval pottery was identified at the western end of the new foundation trenches.

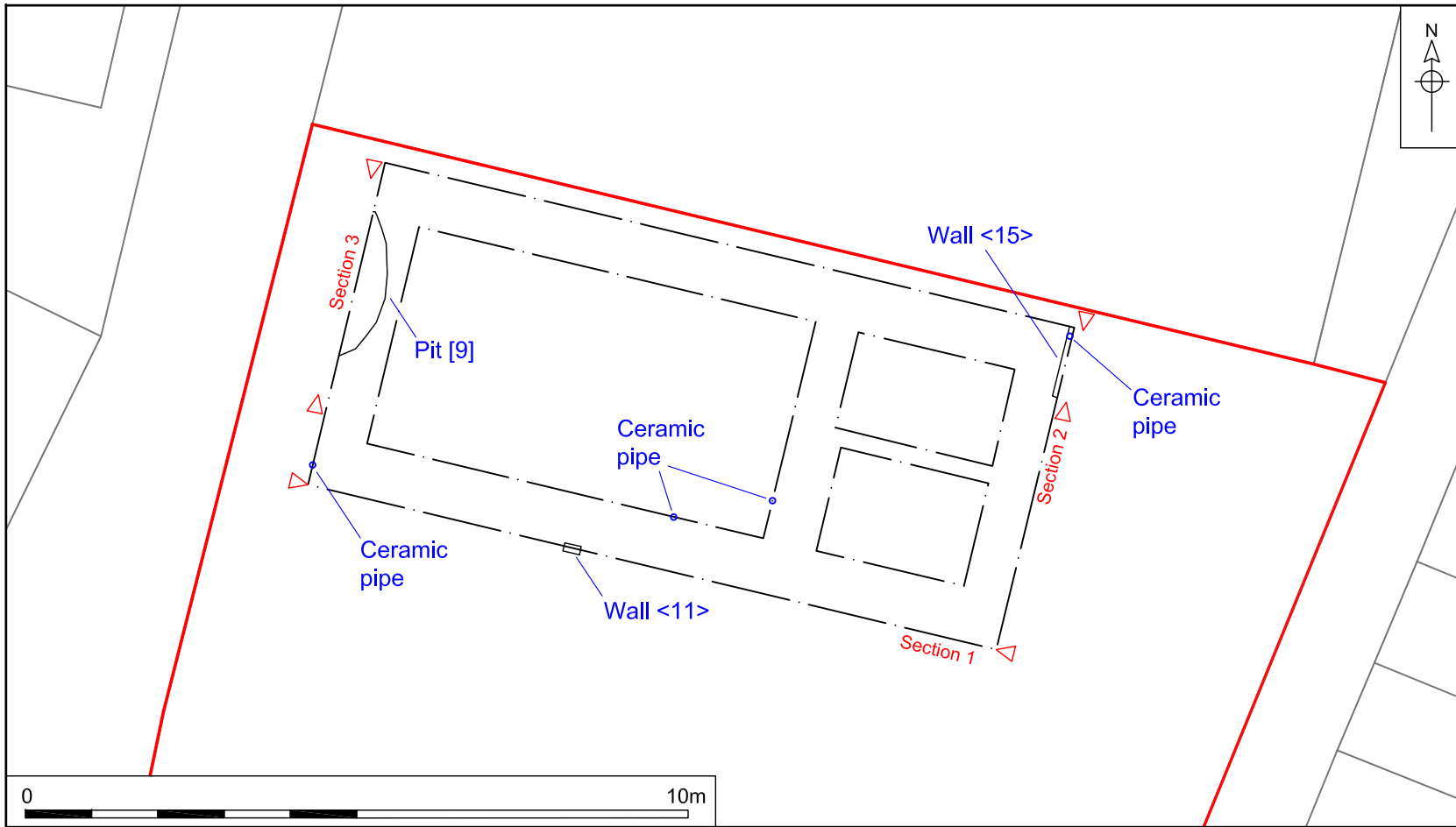
The foundations were, for the most part 1.1m deep, but where the ground was soft or previously disturbed this was increased. Where medieval pit [9] was identified in the centre of the westernmost trench, the depth of the trench was increased to 1.4m (Plate 2), and the depth of the easternmost trench (where there were remains of earlier brick buildings) was increased to approximately 1.6m.

Context numbers were assigned to all significant deposits but the majority of trenches were devoid of archaeological features (Plate 3).



Plate 3 The central trench, looking north

The ground surface was comprised of a layer of gravel 0.07m-0.11m deep, overlying a layer of modern make-up in the form of yellow-orange, dry, crumbly, silty sand, 0.12m-0.19m deep. These layers occurred together across the surface of the site and were assigned a shared context number (context (1)). Beneath this modern layer, over much of the site, was a layer of late post-medieval to modern



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Figure 3. Plan of Trench. Scale 1:100

rubble (2). This was very gritty, blackish in colour, and contained a lot of burnt material and ceramic building material. Beneath this was a layer of dark brown, compact, silty/sandy clay (3) containing yellow and red brick rubble. On the south side of the foundations, the base of a red brick wall <11> could be seen (Fig. 3). The foundation cut for this [12] had been cut into layer (3), and what remained of the wall was overlain by layer (2), suggesting that layer (2) dated from 1958 or later. In the south-easternmost corner of the foundation trenches layer (3) was cut by a deep pit [13] (Fig. 4 Section 1). This was filled with a black, rubbly deposit which was given its own context number (14) although it appeared to consist of the same material as the overlying layer (2). This pit may actually have been a foundation trench for the Victorian housing which became widened and backfilled when they were demolished. Due to the wet nature of the easternmost trench, its depth, and the instability of the section faces, it was not possible to be certain whether pit [13] cut or was filled by the deposits identified as (19) and (20). These were very similar to (14) and to each other but appeared to be cut by remains of Victorian housing footings (cut [16], wall <15> (Fig 4 Section 2, Plate 4). The deposits at the very eastern end of the new foundations were thus quite different and less easy to interpret than those identified across the large part of the trenches. None of these deposits appeared to be earlier than post-medieval in date, however.



Plate 4. Remains of the probable Victorian wall <15> and ceramic pipe (fill (17)) in the north-eastern corner of the foundations

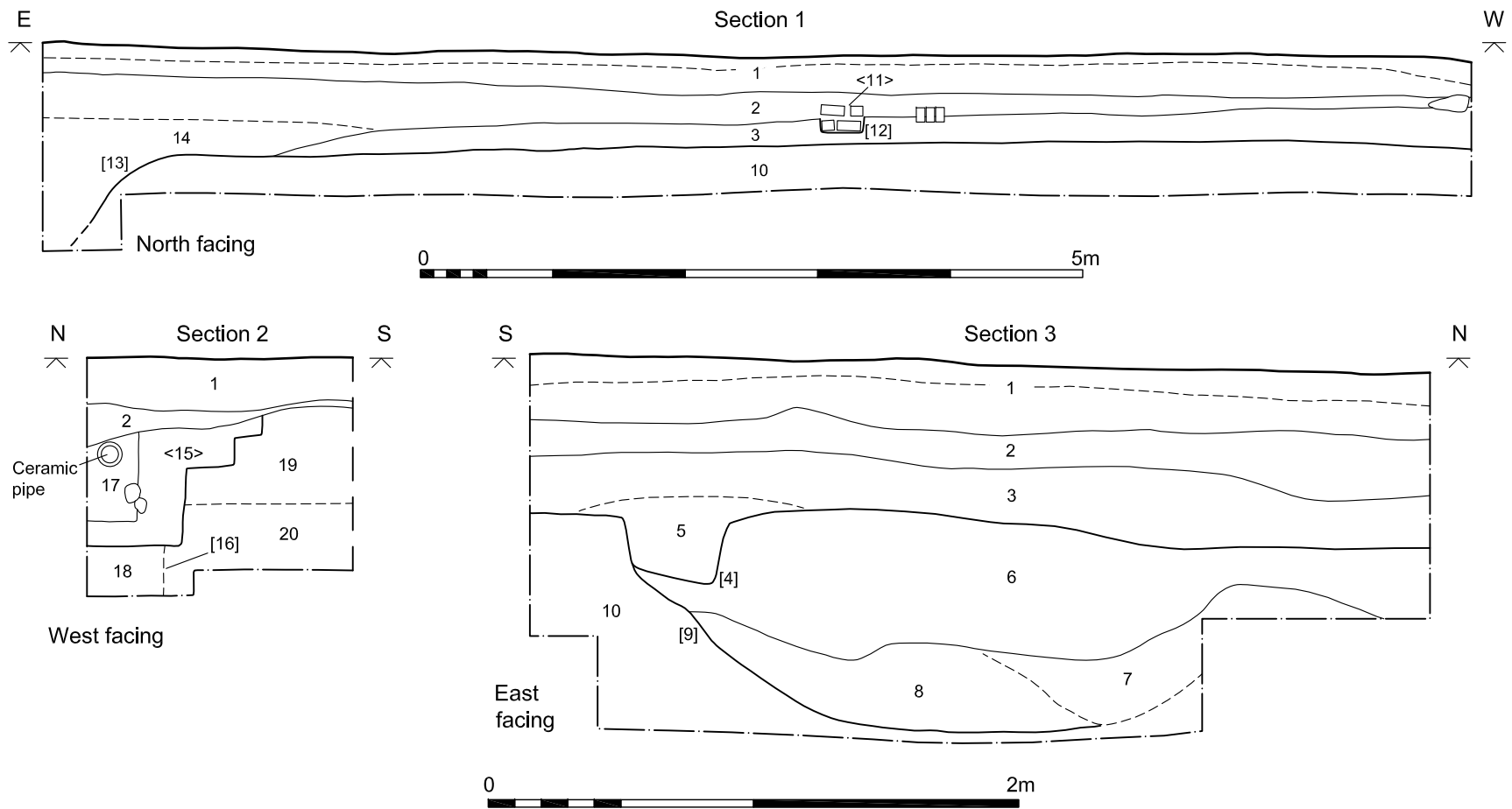


Figure 4. Sections. Scale 1:50 and 1:25

Across most of the site, layer (3) overlay what appeared to be an untouched, natural deposit of very slightly orangey-brown, smooth but silty (or slightly sandy), clay (10). In the westernmost trench however a small, squarish trench or pit [4] with a rubble fill (5) was identified beneath layer (3) (Fig. 4 Section 2). The fill of the trench or pit was very similar to the overlying layer but contained a greater concentration of rubble. This may represent the base of a foundation trench relating to post-medieval housing, perhaps backfilled with a later layer of rubble after demolition of the building. As it lies beneath layer (3) it is likely to be an older than <11> – the brick remains in the southernmost trench section.



Plate 5. Late medieval pit [9]

Feature [4] was cut into a deposit of soft, dark brown clay (6), 0.5m-0.56m deep, containing very occasional brick, charcoal, and small stones. This deposit formed the upper fill of a large pit [9] (Fig. 4 Section 3; Plate 5). The lower fills of pit [9] were comprised of a dark brown, firm, sticky clay (7) with frequent lumps of chalk and ceramic building material (especially tile), and a loose, waterlogged deposit of sticky but gritty black-brown clay (8), containing burnt material (in the form of charcoal or cinders), frequent ceramic building material, and a number of oyster shells and potsherds. Pit [9] itself was approximately 2m wide (N-S); its length could not be gauged but it only appeared in one side of the trench which cut through it. It was cut into smooth clay layer (10). There were no inclusions in this latter layer except in the southernmost trench where occasional ceramic building

material was identified. It is possible that this had washed or worked its way down into the layer from above, or that layer (10) was not an untouched natural layer but was formed during a period of little occupational activity on the site.

6.0 THE FINDS

by Sarah Percival

The finds from the site are presented in tabular form with basic quantitative information in Appendix 2a: Finds by Context.

In addition to this summary, more detailed information on specific finds and environmental categories is included in separate reports below. Supporting tables for these contributions are included in the Appendices.

6.1 Pottery

6.1.1 Medieval

A rim/handle from a large Grimston jug was found in the fill of pit [9]. The sherd is made of fine, hard fabric with a dark grey core and includes part of a strap handle decorated with vertical grooves and green brown glaze. The sherd is typical of Grimston products found in Kings Lynn (Clarke and Carter 1977) and dates to the late 12th to 14th centuries.

The rim from a late medieval/ transitional pancheons was recovered from the lower fill of pit [9]. The rim is made of dense, pale-grey, sandy fabric with occasional quartz inclusions and is decorated with double incised wavy lines on the interior of the rim. The interior and exterior of the vessel are glazed have a dark green glaze. The interior of the rim is heavily worn. The pancheons is similar to examples from Norwich and dates to the 15th to 16th centuries (Jennings 1981, fig.24, 403).

6.1.2 Modern

A total of three pieces of Victorian transfer printed earthenware weighing 17g were recovered from layer (2).

6.2 Ceramic Building Material

The small assemblage of ceramic building material comprised five pieces of early brick in estuarine clays weighing 652g. The brick fragments are small and abraded and none were complete enough to provide measurable dimensions.

Five fragments of plain roof tile were also found again in estuarine fabrics, with frequent quartz sand inclusions. All were probably of medieval date. The tiles are typical of their type, being roughly made with variable firing and colouration. Two examples have incomplete square peg-holes. Lime mortar is present on two of the fragments.

This assemblage indicates the presence of one or more medieval structures near the site, but all of the material was deposited in non-structural features and probably represents demolition waste which was either deliberately deposited in make-up layers as hardcore, or accidentally incorporated into pit fills.

6.3 Clay Pipe

A small piece of stem from a clay tobacco pipe came from the demolition layer (2). The fragment is not closely datable.

6.4 Animal Bone

A total of five pieces of animal bone weighing 65g were recovered from two contexts, both fills of pit [9]. The assemblage represents domestic food waste and includes pieces of bovine rib with cut marks from butchering/skinning.

6.5 Shell

Two pieces of oyster shell weighing 66g were also found in pit [9]. The shell also represents food debris.

6.6 Worked Stone

A small piece of carved chalk weighing 85g was recovered from pit [9]. The piece has two worked surfaces forming a shallow angle. The function of the piece is uncertain but it may have come from a carved moulding.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Evidence of the Victorian terraced housing noted on early 20th-century maps and aerial photographs of this area was uncovered in the course of excavating the new foundation trenches, as was the remains of a late medieval or transitional (to early post-medieval) pit. The site lies just within the boundaries of medieval Lynn, but finds from the site were few and the medieval or post-medieval pit appeared only in one (the outer) section face of a 0.6m wide trench, so was only just clipped by the construction work. The pit was most probably a domestic waste pit – it contained broken crockery, animal bone and oyster shells – but evidence of the settlement to which it related was confined to a few tile and brick fragments of medieval date. More substantial evidence of medieval buildings was detected on the opposite side of Hextable Road during archaeological evaluation work in 2006 (Boyle 2001) however, so it is known that there was medieval settlement in the immediate area. No evidence of earlier activity was noted during the course of the watching brief.

No part of the site is thought to be more archaeologically sensitive than another.

Recommendations for future work based upon this report will be made by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

Acknowledgements

Site work was carried out by the author. The finds were processed and analysed by Sarah Percival. The worked stone was identified by Andy Phelps. The report was edited by Jayne Bown and illustrated and produced by David Dobson.

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Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Description	Period
1	Deposit	Topsoil	Modern
2	Deposit	Modern debris layer	Modern
3	Deposit	Sandy clay and rubble	Post-medieval
4	Cut	Pit or old foundation trench	Post-medieval
5	Deposit	Rubble fill of pit [5]	Post-medieval
6	Deposit	Upper fill of medieval pit [9]	Med./Post-Med.
7	Deposit	Fill of medieval pit [9]	Medieval
8	Deposit	Lower fill of medieval pit [9]	Medieval
9	Cut	Medieval waste pit	Medieval
10	Deposit	Clay layer cut by medieval pit [9]	Medieval
11	Masonry	Brick wall - part of an earlier (Victorian?) building	Post-medieval
12	Cut	Cut for brick structure <11>	Post-medieval
13	Cut	Pit or foundation trench – from construction or demolition of Victorian(?) buildings	Post-medieval or Modern
14	Deposit	Fill of pit [13]. Indistinguishable from (2)	Post-medieval
15	Masonry	Brick wall - part of an earlier (Victorian?) building	Post-medieval
16	Cut	Cut for brick structure <15>	Post-medieval
17	Deposit	Backfill beside wall <14>	Post-medieval
18	Deposit	Backfill of cut [16] beneath wall <14>	Post-medieval
19	Deposit	Blackish rubbly layer in easternmost trench.	Post-medieval
20	Deposit	Brownish-black rubbly layer beneath (19)	Post-medieval

Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary

Period	Feature type	Quantity
Unknown		
Medieval (1066–1539)	Pit	1
Post-medieval (1540–1900)	Walls	2

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period	Notes
3	Ceramic Building Material	2	62g	Med./Post-Med.	Peg tile
2	Ceramic Building Material	1	9g	Med./Post-Med.	Brick
2	Ceramic Building Material	1	5g	Med./Post-Med.	Peg tile
2	Clay Pipe	1	1g	Post-medieval	Stem
2	Pottery	3	17g	Modern	
7	Pottery	1	111g	Medieval	
7	Ceramic Building Material	2	192g	Med./Post-Med.	Peg tile
7	Ceramic Building Material	3	154g	Medieval	Brick
7	Animal Bone	3	42g	Unknown	
7	Shell	2	66g	Unknown	Oyster (discarded)
8	Pottery	1	102g	Medieval	Late medieval transitional
8	Ceramic Building Material	2	489g	Medieval	Brick
8	Stone	1	85g	Unknown	Chalk
8	Animal Bone	2	23g	Unknown	

Appendix 2b: OASIS Finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Medieval	Ceramic Building Material	5
	Pottery	2
Med./Post-Med.	Ceramic Building Material	6
Post-medieval	Clay Pipe	1
Modern	Pottery	3
Unknown	Animal Bone	5
	Shell	2
	Stone	1