
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND
RECORDING AT 17 LITTLEPORT STREET,
KING'S LYNN,
NORFOLK
(ENF 128594)**

**Work Undertaken For
Ian H Bix and Associates
on behalf of
European Healthcare Group PLC**

May 2012

Report Compiled by
Paul Cope-Faulkner BA (Hons)

National Grid Reference: TF 6233 2038
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APS Report No. **35/12**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



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1. SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken at 17 Littleport Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk. The investigations monitored the excavation of a foundation trench for a new boundary wall and works associated with widening of the road.

The site lies in the planned 'New Lands' of Lynn created in the mid 12th century by Bishop William de Turbe which developed along Damgate, the medieval precursor of Norfolk Street and Littleport Street. During the latter part of the 13th century, Lynn was enclosed by a system of defences, largely earthworks with some of the circuit having masonry walls. The route of the defences falls within the development area with the East Gate located immediately south of the site. The East Gate was dismantled in 1800.

The investigation identified a short length of the town wall within a foundation trench. Most other deposits were later post-medieval dumped layers, many of which incorporated demolition material.

Finds retrieved during the investigation include pottery, glass and brick of post-medieval date.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Ian H Bix and Associates on behalf of European Healthcare Group PLC to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks associated with road widening and new wall foundation works at 17 Littleport Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application 11/01039. The investigations were carried

out between the 29th February and 17th April 2012 in accordance with a brief prepared by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

2.2 Topography and Geology

King's Lynn is located 22km northwest of Swaffham and 17km north of Downham Market alongside the River Great Ouse in West Norfolk (Fig. 1).

Littleport Street is located 780m northeast of the centre of King's Lynn as defined by the parish church of St Margaret at National Grid Reference TF 6233 2038 (Fig. 2). The site lies alongside 17 Littleport Street and on the west side of Kettlewell Lane at a height of c. 5.5m OD on generally level ground.

Local soils have not been mapped as the site is within an urban area. The town sits upon deep marine and freshwater silts that overlie the Kimmeridge Clay of the Fen basin (GSGB 1978).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Lynn is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as *Lena* and *Lun* the name is derived from the British '*lindo*' (Welsh *llyn*) meaning a lake (Ekwall 1989, 310). The initial town was centred on St. Margaret's church and priory and granted a charter by Bishop Herbert de Losinga in 1101. Bishop's Lynn, as it was then known, grew rapidly in prosperity because of the advantageous location for the development of a major port with access inland via a number of fenland waterways.

The land north of the Purfleet was called 'New land' and was developed by another Bishop, William de Turbe, in the 12th century when St. Nicholas' was founded as a parochial chapel to St. Margaret's (Owen 1984, 27). The foundations for this new development probably lay along a track connecting the town to the Bishop's mill

on the Gaywood River. This track was known as Damgate or Dampgate and is followed by the course of Norfolk Street and Littleport Street (*ibid.* 13). Clarke and Carter (1977, 411) suggested this track ran along a natural embankment, one of several in the town. Dampgate became the main thoroughfare east out of the town. Development occurred along this road from the mid 12th century as far east as the Bishop's Bridge which lay approximately 100m to the west of the site.

Perhaps built in response to French raids on the English coast or the invasion of Lynn by the 'Disinherited' (Barons) in 1266, Lynn was provided with a series of town defences. The date of construction is likely to be in the late 13th century (Smith 1970, 73). More recently, a date of 1266 has been applied to the defences based on the first murage grant (Clarke and Carter 1977, 435). The defences comprise earth ramparts, stone walls, brick and stone gateways and a broad defensive ditch. The section of wall along Kettlewell Lane is still extant to the north of the site and is constructed primarily of flint and limestone with material suggestive of ballast for ships derived from Scandinavia (Hoare *et al.* 2002). To the south of the site, on Littleport Street, was the East Gate of the town which was demolished in 1800, although elements still survive in the Hob-in-the-Well public house on the south side of Littleport Street. It is possible that Kettlewell Lane originated as an intramural lane, providing unrestricted access to the town defences, although the route of this lane has now moved over the line of the wall at its southern end. East of the gate, lying over the Gaywood River, are the remains of a 16th century bridge consisting of two arches on brick revetments now partly encased in concrete.

King's Lynn was made ready for the English Civil War from 1640 and by January 1642, gunpowder was being stored at several points around the town, including five barrels at Red Mount

Chapel (Richards 1997, 126). Initially the town was Parliamentary, and changes to the town defences, including the construction of hexagonal bastions, may date from this initial occupation as an engineer was sought from Boston in September 1642 to repair the defences. By August 1643, Royalists had taken control of the town which was soon under siege from the Earl of Manchester's forces, particularly in the area around the East Gate. The town surrendered to the parliamentary forces on 16th September and played little part in the remainder of the war.

No 17 Littleport Street dates to the early 18th century and was originally 5 bays wide, reduced to 4 in the 19th century. This house replaced a number of houses fronting Littleport Street and Kettlewell Lane, which are depicted on Henry Bell's 17th century map of Lynn which also shows the wall (lying east of Kettlewell Lane) and the East Gate. In constructing No 17, the portion of wall north of the gate may have been removed to provide a larger garden for the premises. The East Gate was eventually demolished in 1800 as the arches were too low for hay wagons (Higgins 2001, 31). The south side of the gateway had been occupied by the Hob-in-the-Well public house which was replaced by the current building to the south of the site. A similar range of gatehouse buildings appear to have existed to the north which would lie close to the junction of Kettlewell Lane and Littleport Street.

3. AIMS

The aim of the archaeological investigation was to ensure that any archaeological features exposed during the groundworks should be recorded and, if present, to determine their date, function and origin.

4. METHODS

Trenches for the new wall foundations were excavated by machine to depths of up to 0.7m below the current ground surface (Fig. 3; Plate 2). Once the new wall had been constructed, the road was widened by stripping an area approximately 1m wide and 0.4m deep (Plate 6). The sides of the trenches and stripped areas were then cleaned and rendered vertical. Selected deposits were excavated further to retrieve artefactual material and to determine their function. Each deposit was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their descriptions appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and plans at 1:20. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

Following excavation finds were examined and a period date assigned where possible (Appendix 2). The records were also checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them and supplemented by artefact dating.

5. RESULTS

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

The earliest deposit encountered within the foundation trench at its northern end was a north-south aligned wall (004). Constructed of roughly coursed flint cobbles, Carstone and limestone, it measured over 2.5m long, by 0.6m wide and was over 0.15m high (Fig. 4; Fig. 5, Section 2; Plate 4).

Either side of the wall were dumped or demolition deposits comprising grey lime mortar with brick fragments and flint cobbles (005) and light brown sandy silt with flint, brick/tile and mortar fragments (006). These measured up to 0.15m thick.

In the southern portion of the foundation trench was a widespread dumped deposit of crushed grey mortar, flint cobbles and limestone fragments (003). This measured in excess of 0.12m thick (Fig. 5, Section 1; Plate 3). A fragment of glass vessel of 17th – 18th century date was retrieved from this layer along with 18th – 19th century pottery and post-medieval brick.

Sealing all the dumped and demolition deposits within the foundation trench was a further dumped deposit of mixed light brown and greyish brown sandy silt (002) that was 0.31m thick (Fig. 5, Sections 1 and 2).

Cut into this dumped deposit at the northern terminus of the foundation trench was a square foundation trench (009) containing concrete (008) that supported a brick built pier (007) associated with the garden wall of No 17 Littleport Street (Fig. 4; Plate 4). South of this and sealing all deposits was a 0.4m thick layer of topsoil, comprising brownish grey sandy silt with pebbles (001).

Within the stripped area for the road widening, the earliest deposit was a layer of brown clayey sand with frequent mortar fragments (014) that was over 40mm thick (Fig. 5, Section 4).

Constructed upon this deposit was a north-south aligned brick foundation for the path edge (012) that measured 0.28m wide and corresponded to the line of the kerb (Plate 8). Made-ground deposits of greyish brown clayey sand with brick, mortar and tile (011) and greyish brown silty clay (013) were recorded either side of the brick foundations. The former was 0.35m thick (Fig. 5, Sections 3 and 4; Plates 7

and 9) and provided bedding for the current road surface of tarmac (010).

6. DISCUSSION

The wall revealed within the foundation trenches matches the exact line of the town defences as recorded by the Ordnance Survey and on ground observations (Plate 5). Furthermore, it is constructed in a similar style to extant sections of the town wall lying to the north and south. Of medieval origin, the wall is known to have been repaired throughout the post-medieval period. No evidence was apparent in the southern area of investigations that may relate to the East Gate.

The destruction of the East Gate occurred in 1800 and it is possible that the town wall immediately north of it was taken down at the same time. However, the dismantling of this portion of wall may well have occurred when No 17 Littleport Street was constructed. Many of the deposits encountered during this work include brick, mortar, limestone and flints which are likely to have originated from the defences.

Finds retrieved from the investigation comprise pottery, brick and glass spanning the 16th – 19th centuries which was all collected from a dumped deposit.

7. CONCLUSION

Archaeological investigations were undertaken at 17 Littleport Street, King's Lynn, as the proposed development lies over the course of the medieval town defences.

A wall, corresponding to the alignment of the medieval town defences, was identified within the foundation trench for the new boundary wall. Though having its origins in the medieval period, it is unknown if

this is a medieval section or a later repair. No other features relating to the town defences were revealed during the investigation.

The wall was sealed beneath dumped deposits, many of which contain demolition material, presumably from the town wall. No evidence was forthcoming for the date at which the town wall was dismantled, though dumped deposits overlying demolition debris suggests this had occurred by the 18th century.

Pottery, brick and glass of post-medieval date was collected during the investigations.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr I Bix of Ian H Bix Associates for commissioning the work on behalf of European Healthcare Group PLC. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Dave Start kindly allowed access to the library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
 Site Supervisors: Andrew Failes, Chris Moulis
 Finds processing: Denise Buckley
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
 Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
 Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

GSGB Geological Survey of Great Britain



Figure 1 - General location plan

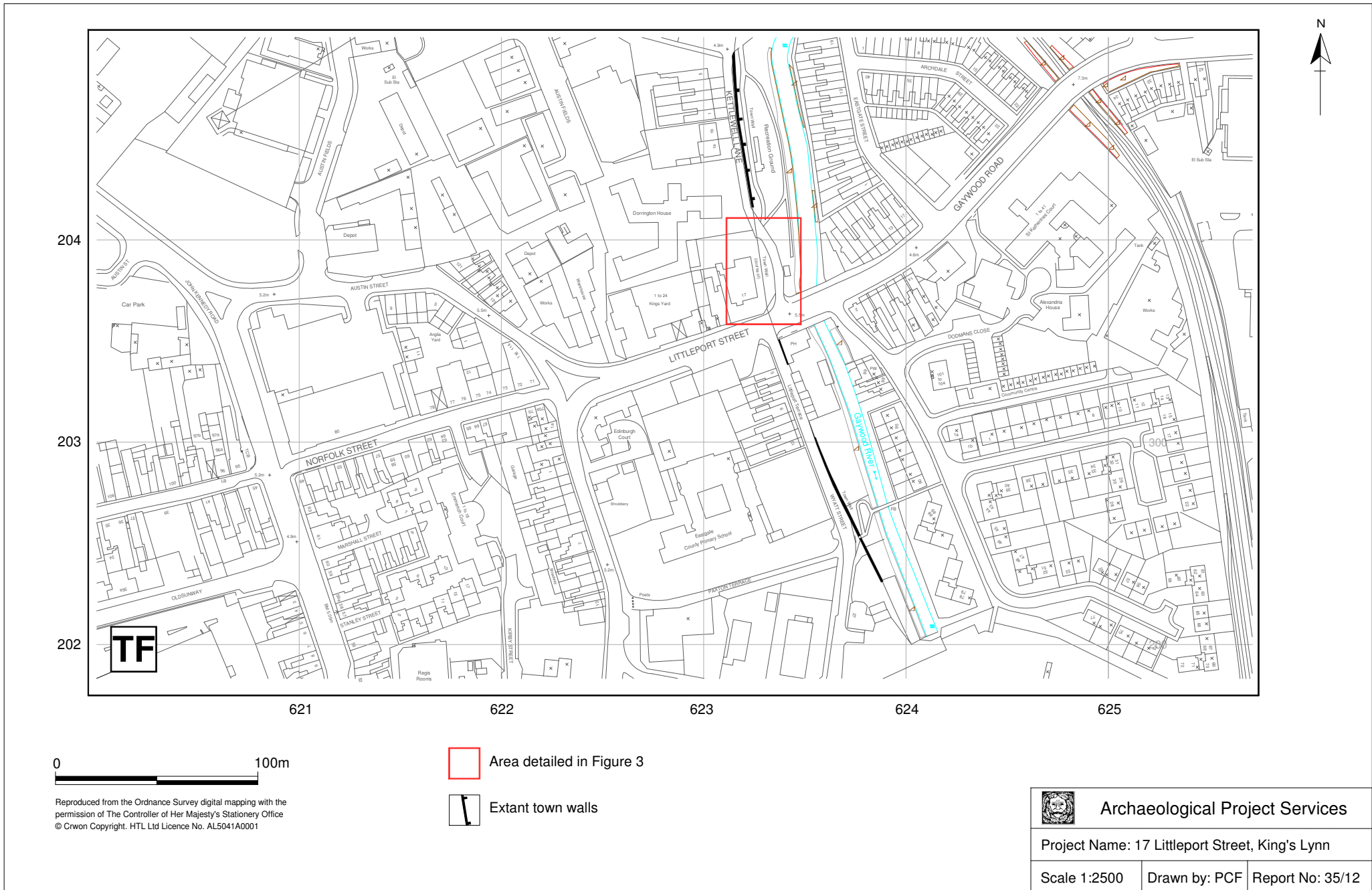


Figure 2 - Site location plan

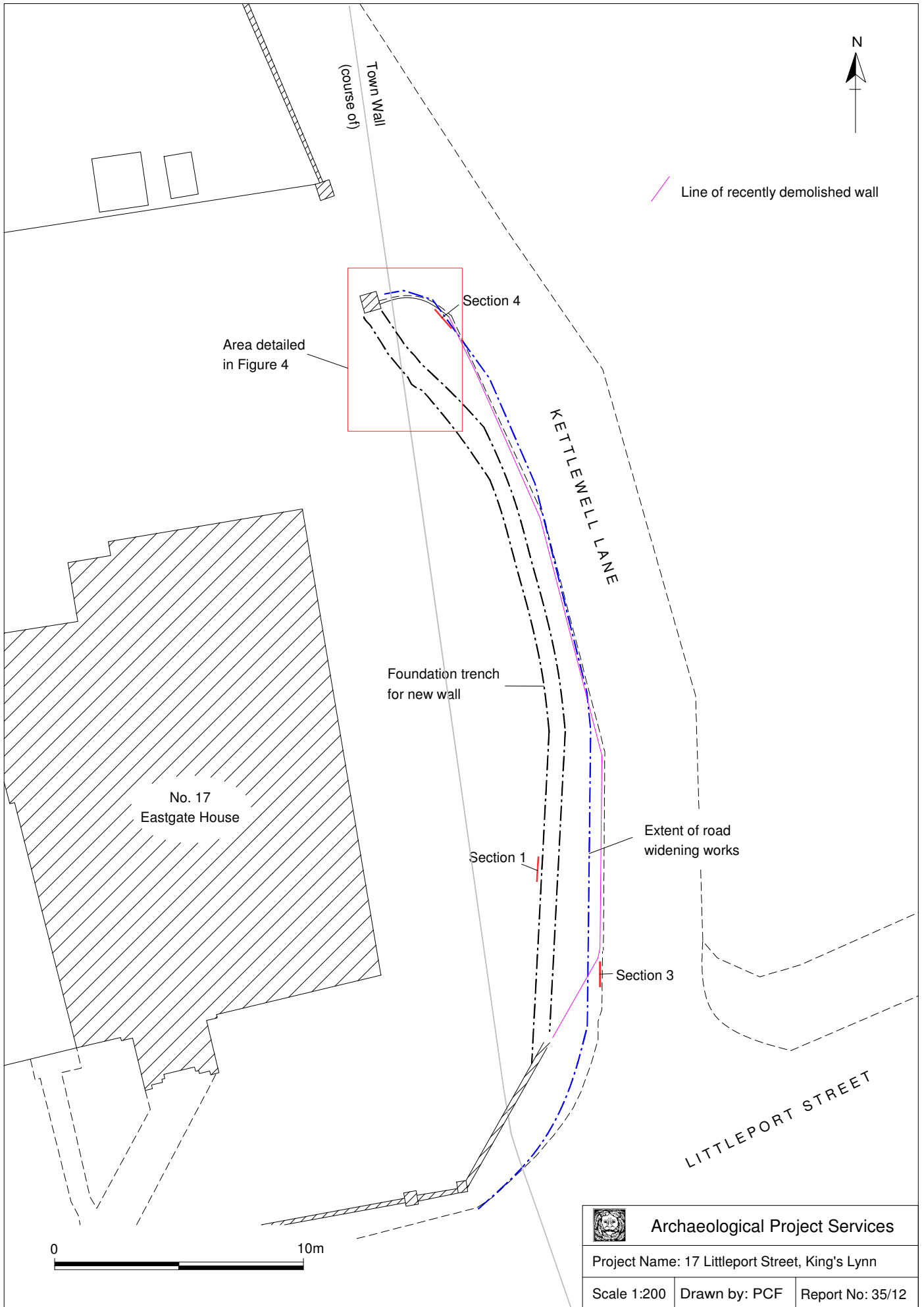
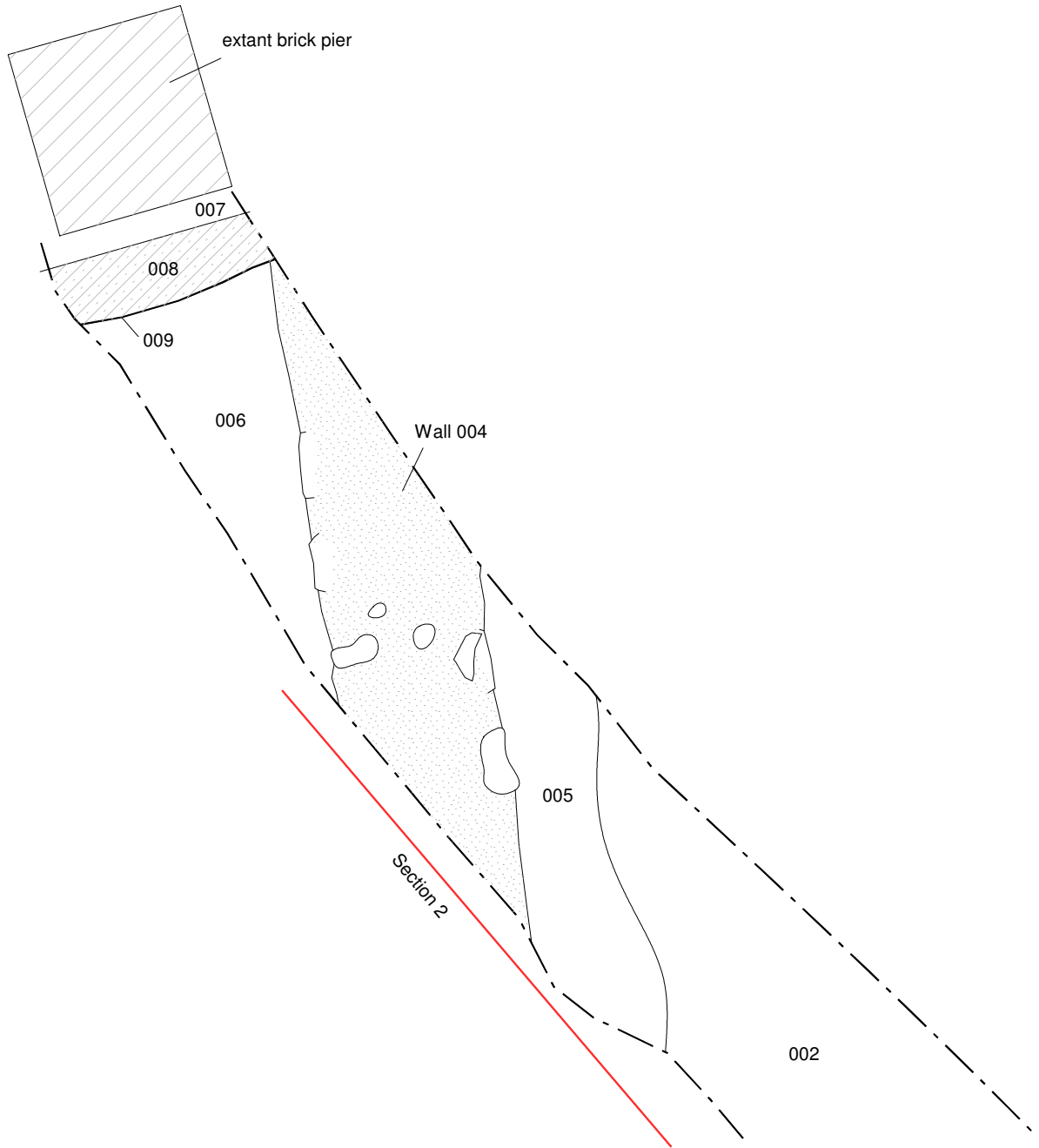


Figure 3 - Plan of the development area showing principal features and section locations




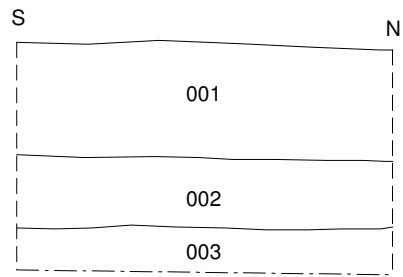
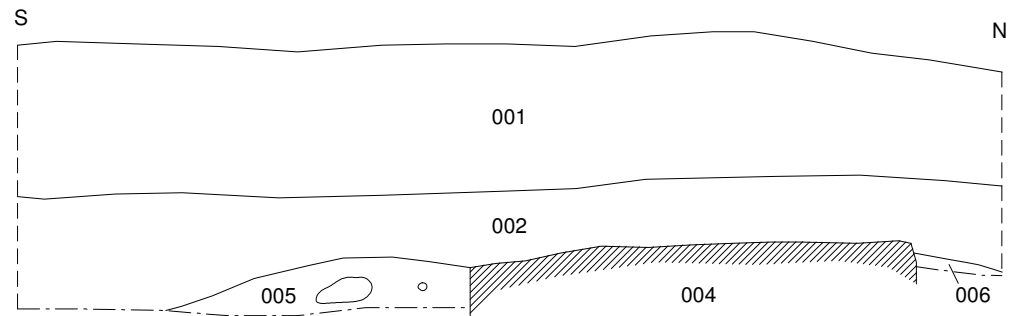
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Project Name: 17 Littleport Street, King's Lynn		
Scale 1:25	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 35/12

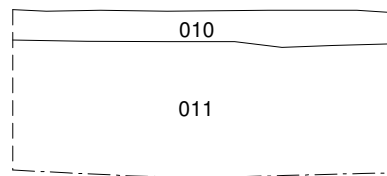
Figure 4 - Detailed plan of Wall (004)



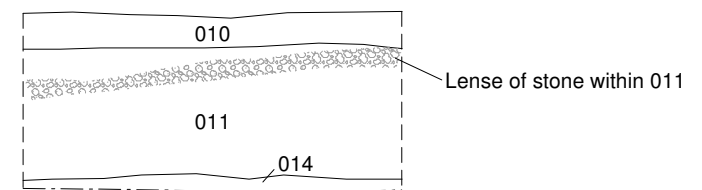
Section 1



Section 2



Section 3



Section 4




 Archaeological Project Services		
Project Name: 17 Littleport Street, King's Lynn		
Scale 1:20	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 35/12

Figure 5 - Sections 1 to 4



Plate 1 – View showing the area of development, looking south



Plate 2 – The foundation trench during excavation, looking northeast



Plate 3 – Section 1, looking west



Plate 4 – Wall (004) as exposed, looking west



Plate 5 – View showing the relationship of Wall (004) with the extant section of town wall lying alongside Kettlewell Lane, looking north



Plate 6 – View showing the road widening works, looking south



Plate 7 – Section 3, looking east



Plate 8 – Brick (012) edging of former path, looking north



Plate 9 – Section 4, looking east

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Soft dark brownish grey sandy silt with frequent pebbles, 0.4m thick	Topsoil
002	Soft mixed light brown and mid greyish brown sandy silt, 0.31m thick	Dumped deposit
003	Loose light grey crushed mortar, flint cobbles and limestone fragments, >120mm thick	Dumped/demolition deposit
004	Flint cobbles, Carstone (0.2m x 0.2m) and limestone (0.2m x 0.25m) structure, aligned north-south, roughly coursed, >2.5m long by 0.6m wide by >0.15m high	Wall
005	Loose light grey lime mortar with brick fragments and flint cobbles, >0.15m thick	Dumped/demolition deposit
006	Loose light whitish brown sandy silt with flint, brick/tile and mortar fragments, >70mm thick	Dumped deposit
007	Brick structure, 0.9m by 0.9m	Gate pier foundation
008	Concrete	Foundation for (007)
009	Square feature, 0.9m by 0.9m, vertical sides, not fully excavated	Foundation cut for (007)
010	Indurated dark grey tarmac, 90mm thick	Road surface
011	Friable to firm mid greyish brown clayey sand with frequent brick, mortar and tile, 0.35m thick	Make-up for (010)
012	Brick (230mm x 110mm x 60mm) structure, 0.38m wide	Former path edge
013	Firm dark greyish brown silty clay	Made-ground
014	Friable mid brown clayey sand with frequent mortar, >40mm thick	Made-ground

Appendix 2

THE FINDS

POST ROMAN POTTERY

By Alex Beeby

Introduction

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Slowikowski *et al.* (2001). The pottery codenames (Cname) are in accordance with the Post Roman pottery type series for Lincolnshire, as published in Young *et al.* (2005), which also covers surrounding counties. A total of two sherds from a single vessel, weighing 44 grams was recovered from the site.

Methodology

The material was laid out and viewed in context order. Sherds were counted and weighed before being examined visually. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the pottery is included in Table 1 below. The pottery dates to the late post medieval/early modern period

Condition

The pieces are moderately sized and fresh.

Results

Table 1, Post Roman Pottery Archive

Cxt	Cname	Full Name	Form	NoS	NoV	W (g)	Part	Comment	Date
003	CREA	Creamware	Bowl or Dish	2	1	44	Rim; base	Fresh break	Late18th-Early 19th

Provenance

The pottery was recovered from dump/demolition layer (003).

Range

There are two pieces from a single bowl or dish in Creamware (CREA). This is a common domestic ware type dating from the late 18th to early 19th century.

Potential

The is no potential for further work. The material has been discarded.

Summary

Two sherds of pottery dating from the very late post medieval/early modern period were recovered during the watching brief.

CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

By Alex Beeby

Introduction

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the ACBMG (2001). A total of six fragments of ceramic building material, weighing 2384 grams was recovered from the site.

Methodology

The material was laid out and viewed in context order. Fragments were counted and weighed within each context. The ceramic building material was examined visually and using x20 magnification. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the ceramic building material is included in Table 2 below.

Condition

There are two large pieces from separate bricks and a small piece of tile. None of the material is abraded or weathered. Both bricks have lime mortar adhered and are likely to have been removed from a standing building during demolition or renovation work.

Results*Table 2, Ceramic Building Material Archive*

Cxt	Cname	Full Name	Fabric	Description	Date	NoF	W (g)
003	BRK	Brick	Gault	Narrow 44mm deep; industrial clinker? Inclusions; flint pebbles; handmade; lime mortar	18th	4	640
003	BRK	Brick	Oxidised; Fine Calcareous	Large item; 71mm deep; 120mm wide; fenland type?; handmade; lime mortar over all sides	17th- 19th	1	1681
003	PNR	Peg, nib or ridge tile	Gault	Flatroofer	16th-18th	1	63
Total						6	2384

Provenance

All of the ceramic building material was recovered from dump/demolition layer (003).

Range

There are pieces from three items of ceramic building material, all of which date to the post-medieval period.

Potential

There is no potential for further work. The material is not worthy of archiving and has been discarded.

Summary

A small amount of brick dating to the post medieval period was recovered during the watching brief.

GLASS

By Gary Taylor

Introduction

A single piece of glass weighing 1g was recovered.

Condition

The glass is in moderate condition, with heavy iridescence.

Results*Table 3, Glass Archive*

Cxt	Description	NoF	W (g)	Date
003	Lip of bowl-shaped drinking vessel, fire-rounded rim, very heavy iridescence	1	1	Post-medieval, perhaps 17 th -18 th century

Provenance

The glass was recovered from a dumped/demolition deposit.

Range

A single piece of post-medieval glass was recovered. It is the lip of a drinking vessel and the level of iridescent decay suggests it is perhaps 17th-18th century in date.

Potential

Other than providing dating evidence the glass is of limited potential. In accordance with current Norfolk Museum's policy with respect to non-retention of post-medieval artefacts it has been discarded.

SPOT DATING

The dating in Table 4 is based on the evidence provided by the finds detailed above.

Table 4, Spot dates

Cxt	Date	Comments
003	Late18th-Early 19th	Date based on pottery from a single vessel. This date is strongly supported by both the glass and ceramic building material also collected from this context

ABBREVIATIONS

ACBMG	Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group
BS	Body sherd
CBM	Ceramic Building Material
CXT	Context
NoF	Number of Fragments
NoS	Number of sherds
NoV	Number of vessels
W (g)	Weight (grams)

REFERENCES

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Young, J, Vince, AG and Nailor, V, 2005 *A Corpus of Saxon and Medieval Pottery from Lincoln* (Oxford)

Appendix 3

GLOSSARY

Alluvium	A deposit (usually clay, silts or sands) laid down in water. Marine alluvium is deposited by the sea and freshwater alluvium by streams, rivers or within lakes.
Context	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretations of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, <i>e.g.</i> (004).
Cut	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, <i>etc.</i> Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
Dumped deposits	These are deposits, often laid down intentionally, that raise a land surface. They may be the result of casual waste disposal or may be deliberate attempts to raise the ground surface.
Fill	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Intramural Lane	A lane alongside and within city or town walls which provides access to the wall in times of defence.
Layer	A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Murage	Tax levied for building or repairing the walls of a town.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
Saxon	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany.

Appendix 4

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

2	Daily record sheets
1	Annotated site plan
1	Plan register sheet
1	Section register sheet
1	Photographic register sheet
1	Context register sheet
14	Context record sheets
5	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Stratigraphic matrix

In accordance with current Norfolk Museum's policy with respect to non-retention of post-medieval artefacts, all finds have been discarded.

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Norfolk Museums Service
Union House
Gressenhall
Dereham
Norfolk
NR20 4DR

Norfolk Environment Service Site Code:

ENF 128594

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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