

**Sea Gates, Lydney Harbour
Lydney
Gloucestershire**

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
The Environment Agency


CA Project: 4629
CA Report: 14082

June 2014

Sea Gates, Lydney Harbour
Lydney
Gloucestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief

CA Project: 4629
CA Report: 14082

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date	5 June 2014
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date	30 June 2014
approved by	Mark Collard, Head of Contracts
signed	
date	4 August 2014
issue	01

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Sea Gates, Lydney Harbour, Lydney, Gloucestershire
Location:	Lydney, Gloucestershire
NGR:	SO 6511 0141
Type:	Watching Brief
Date:	27-28 January and 2 June 2014
SMC:	S00062113
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Dean Heritage Centre
Accession Number:	SOYDH: 2014.14
Site Code:	LYS 14

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the replacement of the operating mechanism for the sea gates at Lydney Harbour, Lydney, Gloucestershire. This watching brief recorded, by drawn and digital record, the structure of the harbour prior to the repair works taking place.

No buried archaeological horizons were recorded during the course of the watching brief, other than 19th and 20th century alterations to the original harbour walls.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In January and June 2014 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for the Environment Agency on the sea gates at Lydney Harbour, Lydney, Gloucestershire (centred on NGR: SO 6511 0141; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC; Reference S00062113) granted by English Heritage on 14 June 2013 for the replacement of the operating mechanism for the sea gates.

1.2 The archaeological watching brief was carried out in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2013) that was approved by Mel Barge, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2009) and the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991), the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006).

The site

1.3 The proposed development area is located at the seaward side of the tidal basin within the main Lydney Docks complex, which lies at c.10m AOD. The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Raglan Mudstone Formation overlain by superficial Tidal Flat Deposits (BGS 2014). The natural substrate was not revealed during the works.

Archaeological background

1.4 An archaeological Desk-based Assessment was carried out by Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT 1999), a summary of which is presented below.

1.5 Archaeological survey undertaken throughout the Severn Estuary has enabled a broad stratigraphic sequence to be applied to many of the areas of low-lying reclaimed land. Buried prehistoric land surfaces have been demonstrated to survive sealed beneath later estuarine alluvial deposits at a number of sites along the estuary, yielding well-preserved palaeo-environmental remains. The location of the current site on the edge of the promontory at a height of around 10m AOD locates it on the periphery of the alluvial zone, consequently the potential for the preservation of such deposits is probably lower than in the reclaimed grounds to the south-west

('New Grounds'). Buried Roman occupation horizons have been identified elsewhere on the Estuary, but these have generally been situated at a level of between 5-6m AOD, around 4m lower than the current site (ibid., 9).

- 1.6 In the medieval and post-medieval period access to the Severn estuary increased Lydney's importance as a trading centre, with a port being established on Lydney Pill. However, the silting up of the local river closed the old harbour and a new wharf had to be built. Pidcock's canal was constructed from 1790 onwards, connecting Upper and Lower Forge at the head of Lydney Pill.
- 1.7 The current canal and basin complex was built by the Severn and Wye Railway and Canal Company between 1810 and 1813 (Fig. 3). A horse drawn tramway was laid, to move the coal and iron to the wharves after it was brought down from the pits and forges on the Pidcock's Canal. The new dock on the estuary was started in 1809 and opened in 1813. The outer, tidal, basin was finally completed in 1821 (ibid., 12-16).

Archaeological objectives

- 1.8 The objectives of the archaeological works were:
 - to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
 - to record, through drawn and photographic means, the existing fabric and layout of the affected areas of the harbour walls;
 - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

Methodology

- 1.9 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2013). An archaeologist undertook an initial photographic survey of the two areas (one on the northern the other on the southern sides of the sea gates) of proposed intrusive groundwork (Fig. 2) and also observed the limited amount of intrusive excavation.

- 1.10 This initial survey consisted of written, graphic and photographic recording, compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2013).
- 1.11 The archive from the watching brief is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the site will be deposited with the Dean Heritage Centre under accession number SOYDH: 2014.14. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)

- 2.1 In January 2014 an initial phase of works was undertaken to assess the impact and situation of the new sea gate mechanisms on the harbour wall. This resulted in the excavation of two test pits on either side of the sea gate, to the north and south (Trench 1 and Trench 2 respectively; Figs. 4 and 5). No archaeologically significant deposits nor the natural substrate was exposed during the groundworks
- 2.2 Prior to the excavation of these trenches, detailed hand plans were compiled alongside an extensive photographic survey so as to record the affected areas of the harbour wall before any alterations were made. This was then supplemented by extensions during further work in June 2014. These plans recorded the top of the standing harbour wall structure (102 and 202) and a flagstone surface adjacent to Trench 1 (103), overlying the made ground deposit 101, and a mixed concrete and flagstone layer (203) adjacent to Trench 2, overlying the harbour wall structure in some places.
- 2.3 Trench 1 revealed clay and brick rubble made-ground layer 101, measuring at least 0.8m in thickness immediately behind the existing sea gate wall. This was covered by a modern deposit of gravel and turf, 100, measuring 0.1m in thickness. Within Trench 2 concrete 201 was revealed at a depth of 0.35m below present ground level immediately behind the extant harbour wall. It was sealed by modern gravel 200.



3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The minimally intrusive nature of these works did not result in the exposure of any buried archaeological horizons. However, some conclusions can be drawn about the condition of the harbour wall and the alterations that it has been subject to over the last two centuries.
- 3.2 The harbour walls themselves were built in the 1820s, and on both sides of the sea gates there was evidence for later addition and modification of this structure. The concrete horizon revealed in Trench 2 (deposit 201) is probably associated with the instalment of the early 20th century gate and winch mechanisms that remain in place (although out of use) today. The concrete and flagstone layers seen surrounding both Trench 1 and Trench 2 (103 and 203) are also likely to be of later construction than the original harbour walls. Despite these alterations the harbour walls remain almost entirely intact.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Alex Thomson. The report was written by Alex Thomson. The illustrations were prepared by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled by Alex Thomson, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman.



5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2014 Geology of Britain Viewer
http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 5 June 2013

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013 *Sea Gates, Lydney Harbour, Lydney, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

CAT (Cotswold Archaeological Trust) 1999 *Lydney Docks, Gloucestershire: archaeological assessment* CAT typescript report no. **991105**

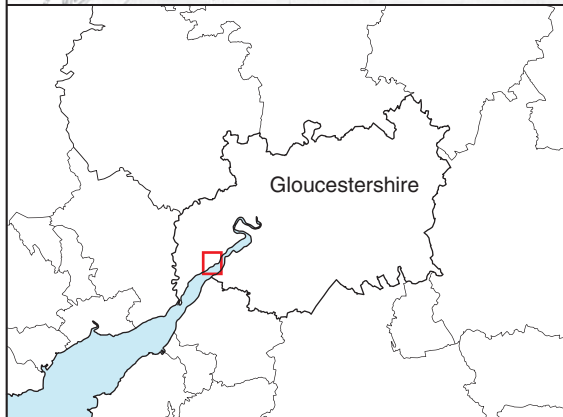
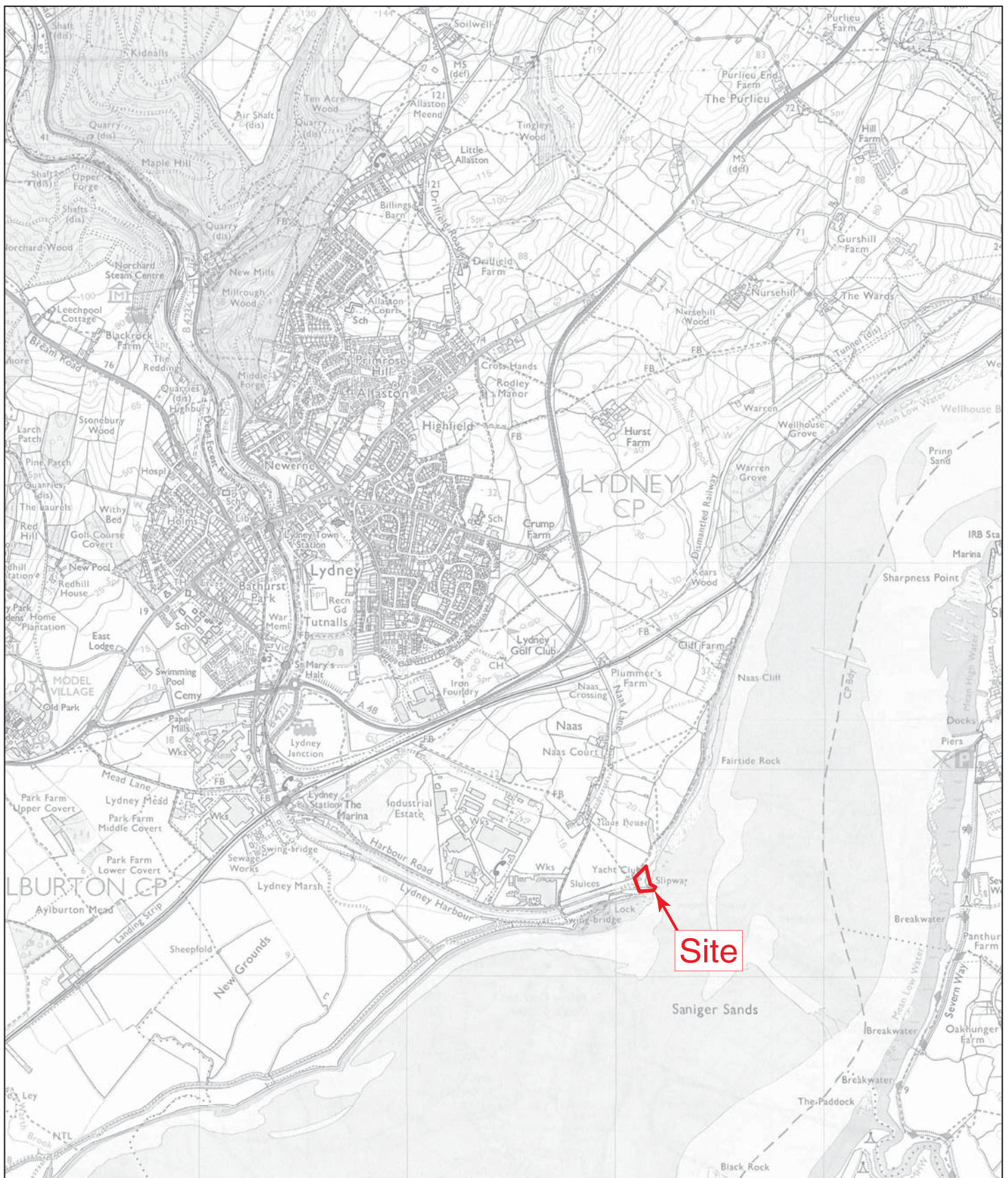


APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Modern surface	Mixed gravel and soils	>1.8	>1.5	0.1	
1	101	Layer		Made ground	Mixed yellowish-brown clay with brick rubble	>1.8	>1.5	>0.8	
1	102	Structure		Harbour wall	Standing Scheduled Monument				
1	103	Layer		Surface	Flagstone and concrete surface	>1.8	>1.5		
2	200	Layer		Modern surface	Purplish-grey gravel	>1.6	>1	0.35	
2	201	Layer		Concrete	Concrete	>1.6	>1		
2	202	Structure		Harbour wall	Standing Scheduled Monument				
2	203	Layer		Surface	Flagstone and concrete surface	>1.6	>1		

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Sea Gates, Lydney Harbour, Lydney, Gloucestershire	
Short description	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the replacement of the operating mechanism for the sea gates at Lydney Harbour, Lydney, Gloucestershire. This watching brief recorded, by drawn and digital record, the structure of the harbour prior to the repair works taking place.</p> <p>No buried archaeological horizons were recorded during the course of the watching brief, other than 19th and 20th century alterations to the original harbour walls.</p>	
Project dates	27-28 January and 2 June 2014	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	Desk-based assessment (CAT 1999)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Lydney Harbour, Lydney, Gloucestershire	
Study area (M ² /ha)		
Site co-ordinates	SO 6511 0141	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	English Heritage	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Alex Thomson	
MONUMENT TYPE	Harbour	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	N/A	N/A
Paper	Dean Heritage Centre SOYDH: 2014.14	Trench sheets, field drawings, photographic registers, typescript report
Digital	Dean Heritage Centre SOYDH: 2014.14	Database, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
<p>CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014 <i>Sea Gates, Lydney Harbour, Lydney, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i>. CA typescript report 14082</p>		



0 1km

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PROJECT TITLE

Sea Gates, Lydney Harbour, Lydney, Gloucestershire

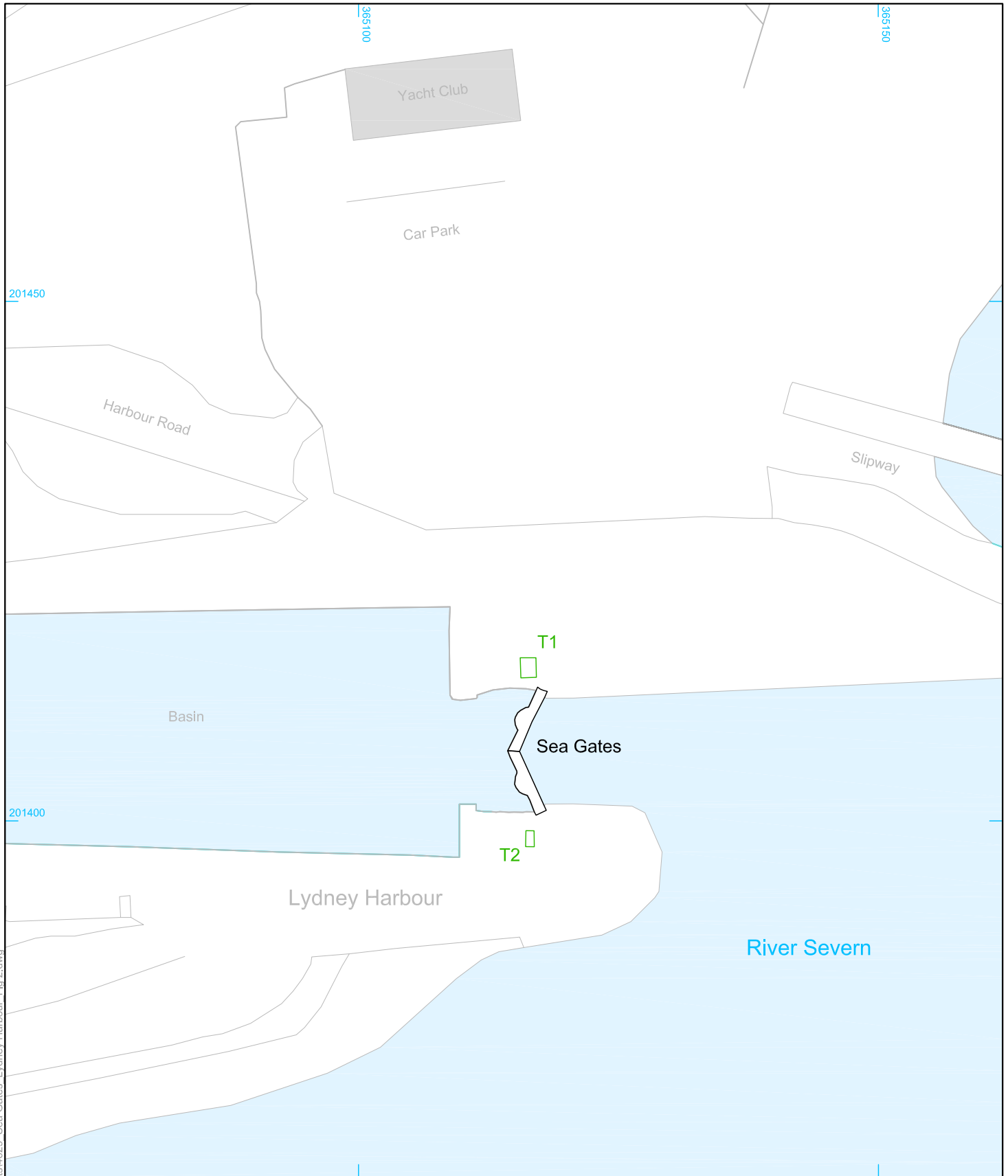
FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

PROJECT NO. 4629 DATE 19/06/2014
DRAWN BY LJH REVISION 00
APPROVED BY LM SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1



 evaluation trench



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FIGURE TITLE
 Site plan showing excavated and
 recorded areas



PROJECT NO. 4629	DATE 19-06-2014	FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY LJH	REVISION 00	2
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FIGURE TITLE

General photographs of the Sea Gates

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FIGURE NO.

3



Northern side of Harbour, looking west, before excavation



Trench 1, looking west



Stones affected by works (highlighted), looking west (1m scale)



Southern area prior to excavation, looking west (1m scale)



Trench 2, looking west



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PROJECT TITLE

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FIGURE TITLE

The southern side of the harbour,
 various views

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FIGURE NO.

5