

**Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief
at 'Bergen Way, King's Lynn,
Norfolk'**

NHER ENF123337

Prepared for:
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Figure 1 Site location
Figure 2 Site plan

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Fig. 1 is based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:50000 colour raster 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' Chris Birks, 4 Well Green Row, Well Green, Frettenham, Norwich, Norfolk, NR12 7GL (28.02.2011). **Reference copy: no further copies to be made.**

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at 'Bergen Way, King's Lynn, Norfolk (NHER ENF123337) on 11 March 2011 for A & D Construction (King's Lynn) Limited. No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were present and no information relating to the 'Old East Sea Bank' known at this location was gained.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out resulting from the construction of a new industrial unit at 'Bergen Way, King's Lynn, Norfolk' (Grid refs. TF 6258 2185) was requested by Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service (ref. CNF42294).
- 1.2 Norfolk Historic & Environment Record ENF123337; OASIS ID: chrisbir1-96286
- 1.3 This report, CB196R, details how Chris Birks undertook these works and summarises the results.

2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 A proposal for the construction of a new industrial unit was made to Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service who requested a Programme of Archaeological Work. An Archaeological Watching Brief (constant attendance) was required to determine the presence/absence, date, and extent, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological layers or subsoil archaeological features.
- 2.2 This archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service (ref. CNF42294, James Albone) and a generic Project Design for Watching Briefs by Chris Birks (Birks 2004). Full details of research aims, methodology and standards are provided in the Project Design.
- 2.3 The site archive will be held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, in accordance with the relevant policy on archiving standards. An OASIS record has been raised – reference number chrisbir1-96286.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 A great number of entries exist in the Norfolk Historic and Environment Record (NHER) for King's Lynn and the surrounding area and only those within the immediate vicinity of the site are described in this report. Full details of these and all other entries can be seen at the NHER office based at Gressenhall, near Dereham, by prior appointment.
- 3.2 King's Lynn has a long history and was well established by the time of the Norman Conquest, as recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. It was one of England's most important east coast ports during the Middle Ages, and was frequently ranked second or third after London. By the 13th century the town's significance was both regional and international. The wool trade reached its peak during the earlier 14th century though had reduced by the early 15th

century. It was originally called Lynn (from the Celtic for 'lake') becoming Bishop's Lynn during the medieval period due to its connection with the Bishop of Norwich and finally Lynn Regis, or King's Lynn, once Henry VIII's charter of 1537 removed this association with Norwich to become crown property.

- 3.3 The 'Old East Sea Bank' (so called as it formed the eastern side of the River Great Ouse, prior to its diversion) extends across the development site in an approximate north-south orientation (NHER 5528). Aerial photographs taken in 1946 show this extensive sea defence bank as earthworks and cropmarks. Medieval salterns exist behind the bank and appear to predate it. The bank was probably constructed during the 17th or early 18th century and is visible on Faden's 1796 map of Norfolk running from the north edge of King's Lynn northwards across the saltmarsh through South Wootton and up to North Wootton. The bank continues up the coast to the Babingly River, where it is recorded as NHER 27104 and NHER 36882. The course of the bank is not depicted on a 1588 map of Castle Rising Chase, but does appear to be depicted on a 1732 map of Castle Rising Estate (Smythe 1732).
- 3.4 The findspot of a spearhead of unspecified date or type lies to the east of the development site, reportedly found in 1957 (NHER 16832).

4.0 Geology and Topography

- 4.1 King's Lynn parish lies mostly upon a solid geology of the Upper Jurassic series with areas of Lower Cretaceous at its easternmost side (Funnell 2005). Overlying marine and river alluvium deposits are present (Funnell 1994). The soil landscape is dominated by Black Fen deposits with areas of Marshland deposits to the south and West Norfolk Lowland deposits to the east (Corbett and Dent 1994). Much of the land in this area was reclaimed from the Wash since the 17th century (Corbett and Dent 1994) and drainage during this period has caused extensive loss of peat deposits. This area is one of the most extensive and intensively farmed arable lands in the country (Corbett and Dent 1994).
- 4.2 The site lies in North Lynn Industrial Estate to the north of King's Lynn at an elevation of c. 10m OD.

5.0 Results

- 5.1 Fieldwork was carried out on 11 March 2011 during ground works associated with the development.
- 5.2 Site conditions were generally good and access was gained from Bergen Way to the north of the site. The weather was sunny but cold.
- 5.3 All deposits, exposed surfaces and spoil arisings were scanned with a metal detector. No context numbers were allocated during the course of the work due to the lack of suitable archaeological finds, features or deposits.
- 5.4 The new building (*Fig. 2*) was constructed using driven piles rather than augered and were not monitored.

- 5.5 The foul water interceptor tank measured 1.2m by 1.2m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.6m beneath present ground level (*Plate 1*). Initially, 0.15m of tarmac was removed that overlay between 0.2m and 0.5m of compact sand and gravel substrate with medium sized flint pebbles above a dark greyish brown clay with very rare very small (< 0.005m) rounded flint and quartz stones. There was notable blue grey discolouration of the clay in the upper 0.5m, cause unknown. The trench was cut by a modern service trench to a depth of 0.9m beneath the present ground level and was backfilled with small sized flint gravel.
- 5.6 Mains services extended to a maximum depth of 0.5m below present ground level removing modern deposits only.

Plate 1. Excavations for foul water interceptor tank, looking north



6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Monitoring during excavations associated with the construction of the new industrial unit revealed no archaeological remains. It is possible the clay deposit encountered beneath modern deposits relates to the 'Old Sea Bank' though no dateable finds were present. Equally, the clay may represent 'natural' marine/alluvium deposits.

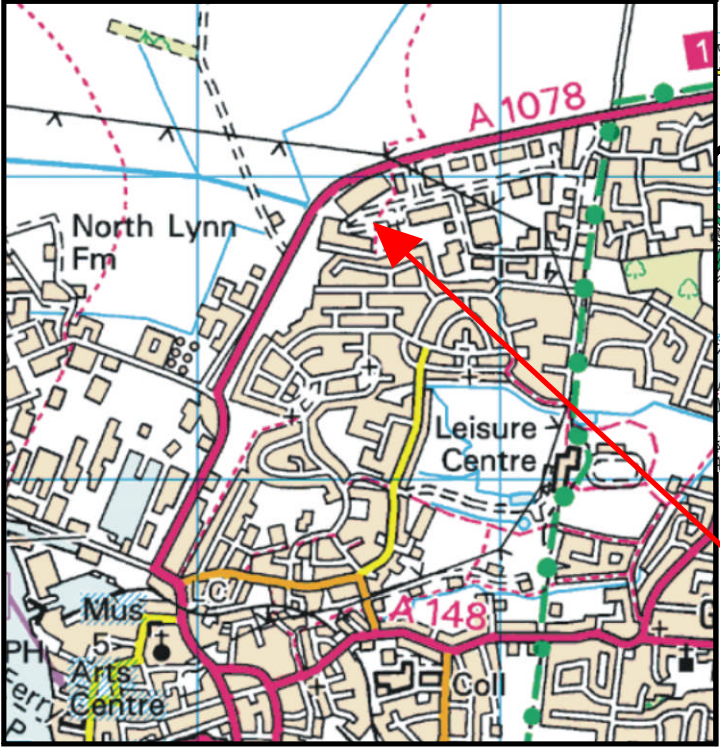
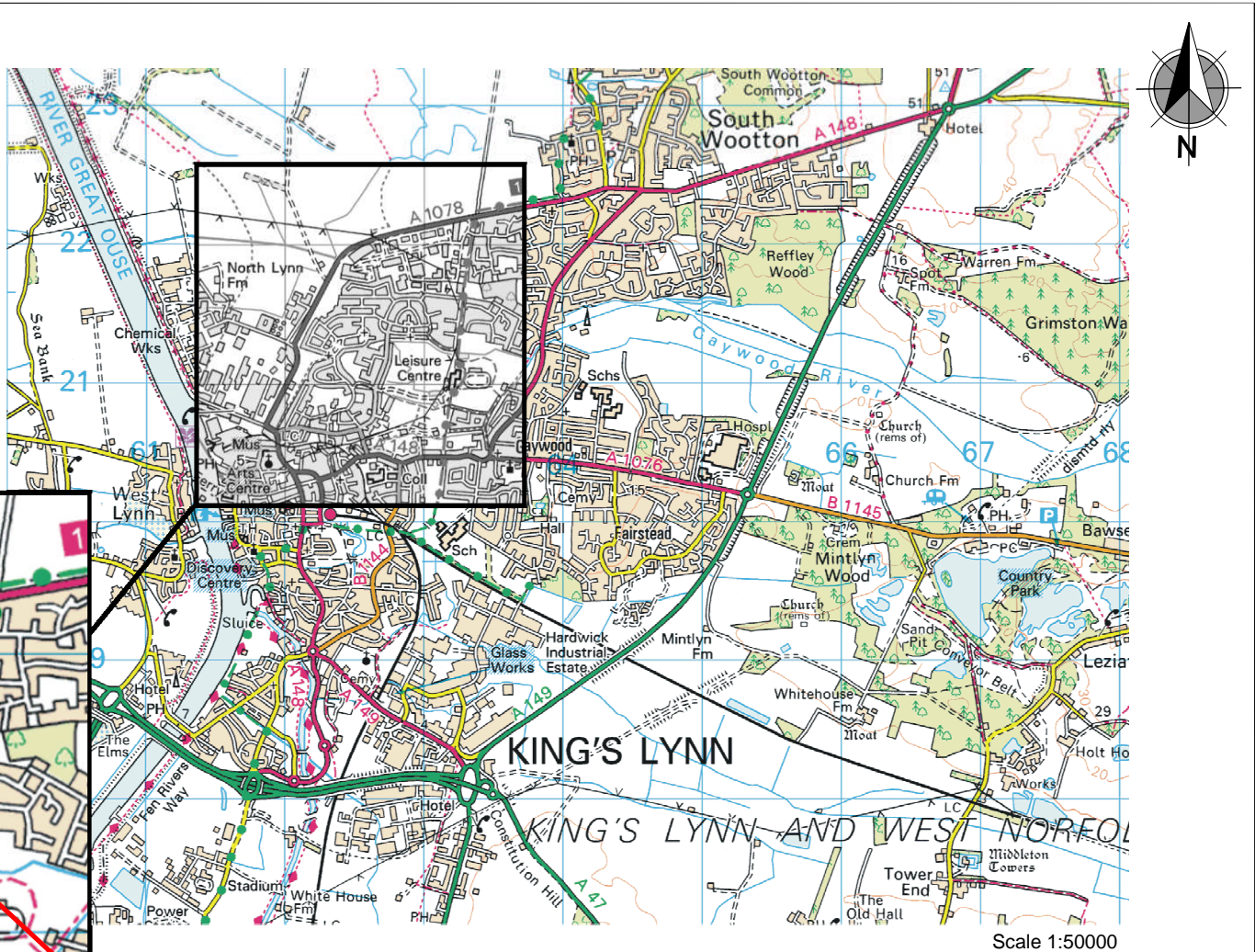
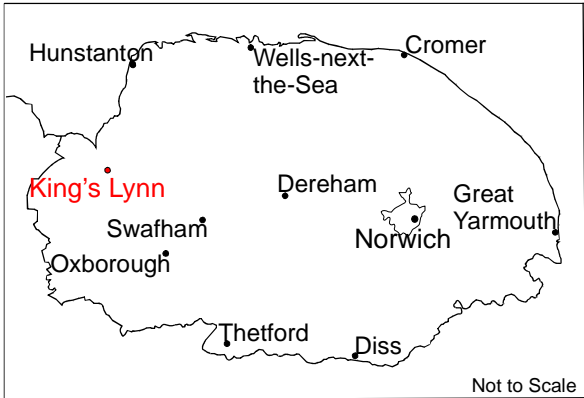
Acknowledgments

The project was undertaken by Chris Birks on behalf of A & D Construction (King's Lynn) Limited who also funded the work. Fieldwork was undertaken by John Simmons. The *draft* report was written by John Simmons and edited by Chris Birks. The *final* report was written and distributed by Chris Birks.

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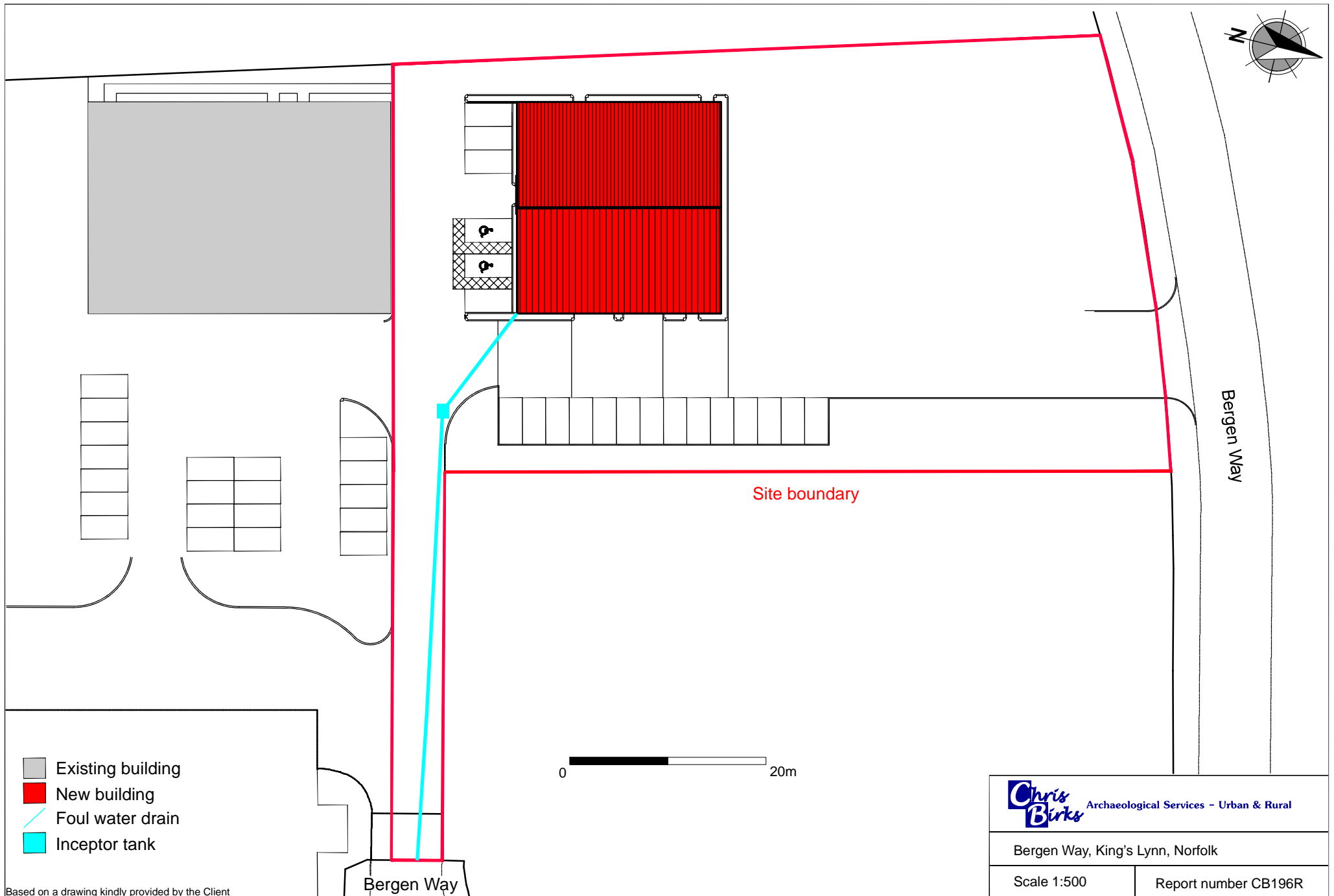
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The Site

Bergen Way, King's Lynn, Norfolk	
Scale n/a	Report number CB196R

Figure 1. Site location



Based on a drawing kindly provided by the Client

Figure 2. Site plan