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Historic Places Investigation

The Common Staithe, King's Lynn, Norfolk: An architectural and archaeological assessment

Jonathan Kewley

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THE COMMON STAITHE
KING'S LYNN, NORFOLK:
AN ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Jonathan Kewley

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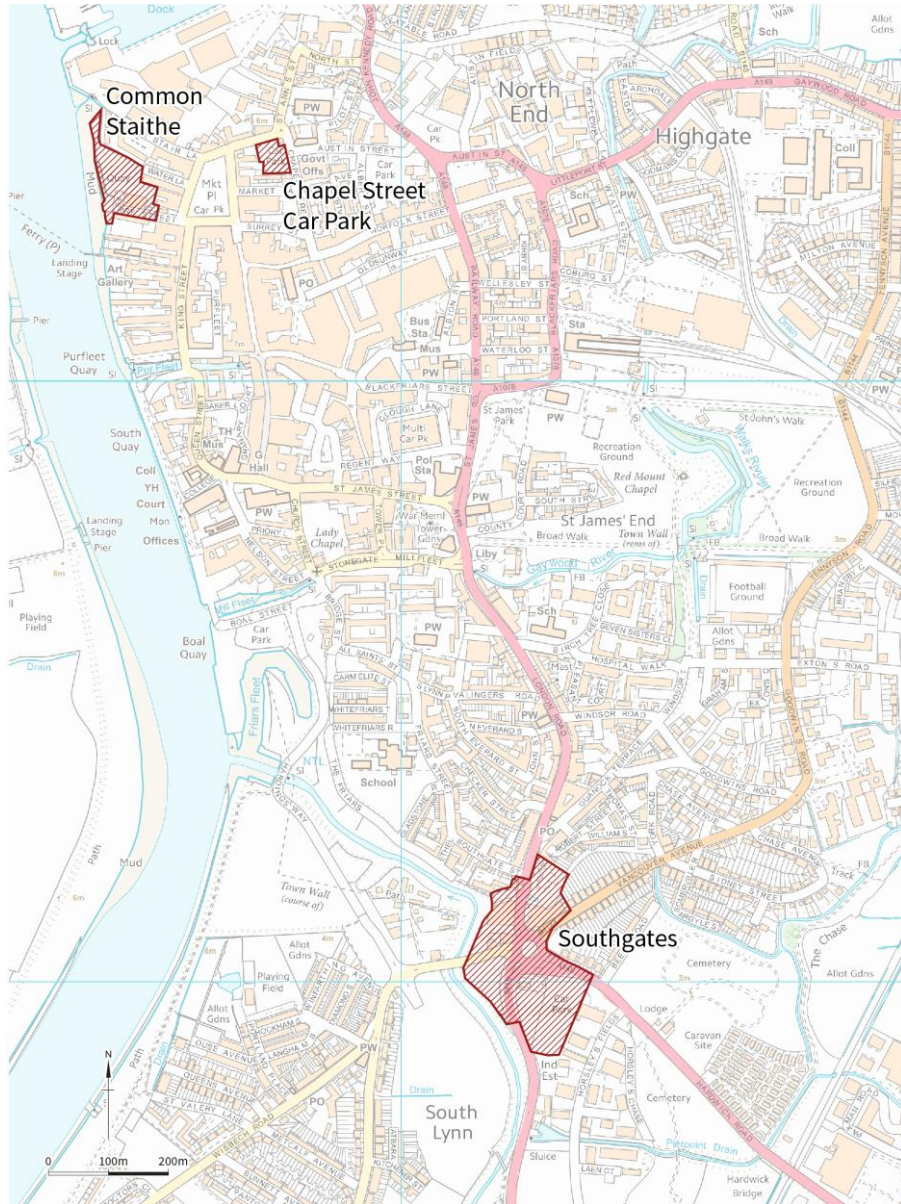
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Central King's Lynn showing the three sites for which Historic England has produced Research Reports as part of the HAZ. Graphic by Sharon Soutar based on Modern Ordnance Survey mapping: © Crown Copyright and database right 2017. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900

Cover illustration: An aerial view of the Common Staithe from the south, 2017 (detail of HEA 33198.009 Damian Grady 19-JUN-2017 ©Historic England).

SUMMARY

King's Lynn was for much of the medieval and early modern period one of the principal ports of England, and it retains an important stock of historic buildings, despite 20th-century losses. It was designated a Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) in 2017, and three particular sites were identified for which research by Historic England could inform possible future regeneration. These were the Common Staithe and Chapel Street Car Park, both in the north of the town, and Southgates in the south. Each is the subject of an Historic England Research Report; the relationship between the three areas is shown on the map opposite.

This present one examines the history of the Common Staithe, one of the principal mercantile centres of early modern King's Lynn, and the buildings on it. It analyses the surviving structures, which consist of Georgian warehouses, early Victorian public baths, a mid-Victorian pilot office and what are suggested to be fragmentary remains of the early modern and earlier warehouses or dwellings on the site. It also assesses the archaeological potential of the currently vacant parts of the site.

The report is based on site visits and archival and printed sources, together with some secondary background reading on medieval and early modern ports and early public baths.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jonathan Kewley researched and wrote the text. He and Katie Carmichael took measurements of the surviving buildings which she turned into a plan. Photography was by Jonathan Kewley and Patricia Payne, as credited. Aerial photography was by Damian Grady.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND CODES USED IN THE REPORT

BGS British Geological Survey

HEA Historic England Archive

HAZ Heritage Action Zone

NGR National Grid Reference

NHER Norfolk Historic Environment Record

NHLE National Heritage List for England

NRHE National Record of the Historic Environment

OD (above) Ordnance Datum

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1 INTRODUCTION

King's Lynn is the principal town of north-west Norfolk, defined over the centuries by its relationship with the changing shoreline of the Wash. In geological terms the area consists of a layer of tidal flat deposits known as the Terrington Beds, which have been laid down within the last two millennia over the Kimmeridge Clay Formation.¹ As these deposits have (with or without human help) risen above sea level, so the settled area has grown.

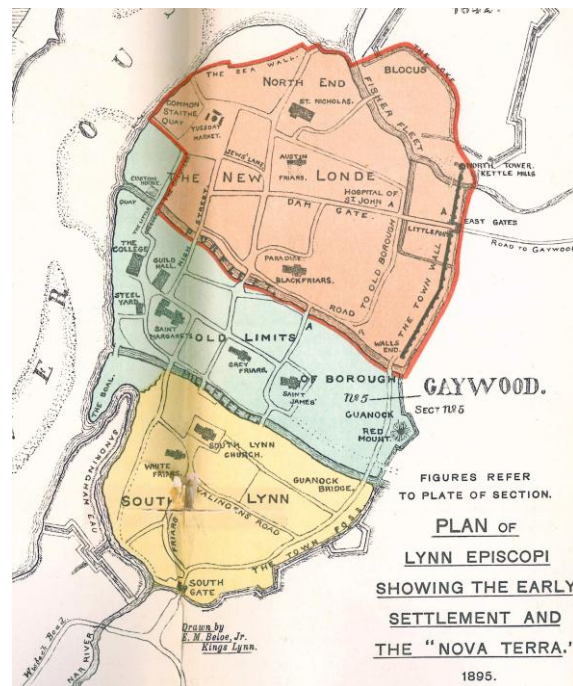


Fig. 1 A plan showing the three areas which developed into modern King's Lynn: first South Lynn, then the original borough and finally the Newland. From E M Beloe 1895 'Freebridge Marshland Hundred and the Making of Lynn' *Norfolk Archaeology* XII 311-34

Lynn is a town of three parts (Fig. 1). The oldest is what is now the parish of South Lynn, originally an island of salt-panners in the Wash, but now covering the area of the present-day town south of the Millfleet, although not part of the borough until the 16th century.

The second stage began in 1090, when Herbert de Losinga, Bishop of the East Anglian diocese then called Thetford, hived off the central part of the island, the area now between the Millfleet and the Purfleet, and there established the priory and parish church of St Margaret's and the Saturday Market; Losinga named it Lynn Episcopi, possibly replacing a regional centre further east at Bawsey.²

The northernmost part of the island has traditionally been seen as the newest, but across it ran a main east-west land- and water-route, represented today by the ferry

from West Lynn and by Norfolk Street. A slight bank (rather like a causeway but seemingly natural) runs north from St Margaret's, and where it cuts the east-west route is what is now the Tuesday Market Place and the Common Staithe, which recent writers suggest had developed informally in the first half of the twelfth century.³ Alterations to the Fenland river system meant that the Great Ouse flowed out past Lynn, and (naturally or with assistance) the area of dry land increased. In 1146-50 William de Turbe, Bishop of Norwich, organised the settlement as his 'New Londe', extending northwards to the old Fisher Fleet and centred on St Nicholas', a grand church but officially a chapel of ease to St Margaret's. Unlike South Lynn, the Newland was part of the parish and borough of Lynn Episcopi. The town was officially renamed Lynn Regis or King's Lynn in 1537, but to its inhabitants it is just Lynn. Its fortunes have waxed and waned with the changing courses of the waterways of the Fens to the south-west. As early as King John's reign in the early 13th century it was one of the principal ports of the kingdom, and at its peak it carried much of the wool trade of the Midlands. In W. G. Hoskins' list of the comparative size and wealth of English towns, Lynn is eleventh in 1334, seventh in 1377 and eighth in the 1520s, after which it declines to twenty-second in 1662 and forty-first in 1801; by the Restoration its commerce seems to have depended on the inland coal trade (by sea from Newcastle and then from Lynn by inland waterways), but it remains a significant port today.⁴ It is on the mercantile centre of Early Modern Lynn, the Common Staithe, that this report will concentrate; the boundaries of the HAZ site of some 0.9 hectares are shown in Figures 2 – 4, and Figure 5 is a general view. Plan A shows the principal buildings and groups them by date.



Fig. 2 The boundary of the HAZ Common Staithe area. Modern Ordnance Survey mapping; © Crown Copyright and database right 2017. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900



Fig. 3 The boundary of the Heritage Action Zone site at the Common Staithe imposed on an aerial view from the south-east. Detail of HEA 33198/009 Damian Grady 19-JUN-2017 ©Historic England



Fig 4. The boundary of the Heritage Action Zone site at the Common Staithe imposed on an aerial view from the west. Detail of HEA 33198/002 Damian Grady 19-JUN-2017 ©Historic England.



Fig. 5 Looking south over the Heritage Action Zone site at the Common Staithe.
Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 27-FEB-2017 ©Historic England

Plan A (*opposite*) The principal buildings in and around the Common Staithe today, and their approximate dates.

Base map: Modern Ordnance Survey mapping: © Crown Copyright and database right 2017. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900. Graphic: Jonathan Kewley

Structures

A = Trinity Wharf

B = Corn Exchange

C = Outbuildings of former Gurney's house

D = Public lavatories

E = Walls probably surviving from 16th/17th-century Common Staithe

F = Carpenters' Shop

G = Public Baths

H = Crown and Mitre public house

I = Pilot Office

J = Buoy Stores (warehouses)

K = Surviving old quay

L = top of old quay, visible in the tarmac

Phases

Green = pre-19th century

Yellow = late Georgian

Pink = Victorian

Purple = early 20th century

Red = late 20th century

Base colour only = not researched (outside HAZ boundary)



Endnotes

¹ British Geological Survey Sheet 145

² A R J Hutcheson 2006 'The Origins of King's Lynn? Control of Wealth on the Wash Prior to the Norman Conquest' *Medieval Archaeology* 50 71-104, 103

³ D M Owen c. 1984 *The Making of King's Lynn: a documentary survey*. London: OUP for the British Academy, 11; H Clarke and A Carter 1977 *Excavations in King's Lynn 1963-70*. London: Society for Medieval Archaeology, Fig. 186; Brown, R, and Alan Hardy, 2011. 'Archaeology of the Newland: Excavations in King's Lynn, Norfolk', *East Anglian Archaeology* 140, Oxford: Oxford Archaeology South, 100-03.

⁴ Reproduced in Brown and Hardy as Table 1.1. p. 5

2 HISTORY

2.1 THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE SITE

The Heritage Action Zone at the Common Staithe has a tightly-defined boundary, but to understand it fully it is necessary to give some consideration to the area of which it is a part (Figs. 6 and 7).



Fig. 6 The block of which the Common Staithe forms part, as shown on the 1883 Ordnance Survey map (125" to 1 mile OS map, surveyed 1883, published 1887, taken from the Historic England corporate GIS, NTS (Historic Ordnance Survey mapping © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2018). Licence number 000394 and TP 0024).

That area is an urban block forming the south half of the space between the River Ouse on the west and the Tuesday Market Place on the east, and bounded on the south by what is now called Ferry Street and on the north by Water Lane (Pudding Lane, before the late Georgian Paving Commissioners changed names they thought undignified).¹ This block is not just a geographical unity; it is also distinguished by having for much of its existence been in common ownership, that of King's Lynn Corporation.

Its primary function was what its name implies; in the dialect of the Danelaw, staithe (or staith), of Norse derivation, means 'a landing place from a river...', and the Common Staithe was open to anyone who paid tolls to its owner, until the Reformation the Holy Trinity Guild (the dominant body in the town), thereafter the

town corporation.² It was by no means the only public landing place - in c. 1577 there were no fewer than thirty-one listed, although what exactly that means is unclear; it is possible that Lynn, like London, had wooden *pontes* which extended into the river from most public thoroughfares.³ However, it seems that in late medieval and early modern England, most imported merchandise came through controlled entry points, which as a result had the only warehouses of any great size.⁴



Fig. 7 An aerial view of the Common Staithe and its surroundings from the east in 1952. In the foreground is the Tuesday Market Place and in the background the Great Ouse, with the jetty from which the ferry departed. Note that the foreshore at the Common Staithe, while silted up, has not yet been reclaimed. Detail of HEA (Aerofilms Collection) EAW044459 27-JUN-1952

The Common Staithe was one of these points and was of course near one of the two principal market-places of the town. Being at the east end of the ferry across the Ouse made it part of an important national east-west route, and – crucially – it was

more than just a quay; by the 16th century it was also a warehouse complex. Many Lynn merchants had premises consisting of houses at the front with long warehouses behind leading down to a private quay or jetty on the river or on one of the canal-like 'fleets'. A quay or wharf was also a property right – the right to land somewhere, or to impose tolls on others landing there.⁵

However, there were also many merchants trading in Lynn who were either resident but unable or unwilling to acquire their own waterfront premises, or who were non-resident. It was for them that the Common Staithe complex was designed, for they could rent space from the Corporation on whatever terms the two parties agreed.⁶ The obvious comparison is with the Steelyard in the City of London, which included a tavern on the street, a council chamber, houses and rows of warehouses running to a quay with a crane.⁷

Lynn's trade was not just local; in the 13th to 15th centuries there was both corn and wool, traded for fish in Iceland, timber and furs in Norway and wine from Gascony. The hinterland which supplied the port with wool extended west and south as far as Warwickshire and Buckinghamshire.⁸ Lynn had a strong connection with the Hanseatic League, and Lynn merchants are recorded in Stralsund in 1391, although a century later the trade was mainly in German hands.⁹ By 1424 foreign merchants resident at Lynn were organised for taxation purposes into 'merchants of Prussia', 'merchants of Norway', 'merchants of Iceland' and 'other merchants'.¹⁰

The idea of an open space at the maritime entrance to a port city was widespread throughout northern Europe. Detmar Ellmers has pointed out that both King's Lynn's market places (the Tuesday and the Saturday) were originally harbour-markets, their western sides lapped by the river.¹¹ In due course buildings facing the market place were built on land naturally or artificially accruing to the west, and Ellmers sees this as 'very much in line with ... many other harbour-markets which grew to become trading towns'.¹² Such harbour-markets were on the *ripa emtoralis* or commercial shore, defined by A. G. Dyson as 'a limited and well defined portion of the waterfront at large'.¹³ Restricting it allowed the authorities to be sure that customs were paid.¹⁴

This waterside location became less important once the separation of sea-going and land-based merchants was broken down.¹⁵ Instead, one of a number of strategies was adopted. The harbour market, especially if now landlocked, could become an ordinary market for day-to-day goods, and towns might erect public warehouses at their waterfronts where 'merchandise could be stored, exchanged and prepared for transportation, all under the shelter of a roof and [still] under the control of the city government'.¹⁶

In Lynn the process was less clear-cut. The Tuesday Market was already so called in the Newelonde Survey, which suggests local use, and warehouses were built, but the

Common Staithe continued for centuries to be a largely open area (and one definitely open and welcoming to the river).¹⁷ Thus while rarely used for selling anything, it remained in mercantile use, and was the way by which overseas merchants would have entered the Tuesday Market Place.

Documentary evidence shows that the shoreline at King's Lynn was moving westward during the high and late Middle Ages; some time about 1270 a grant of land was made 'with all the soil and sand which accrue to the same plot, or which may accrue by the quays' and 'with the increase of the adjacent soil and sand, extending to the aforesaid water',¹⁸ although the grantees 'shall have the right to take [it] away'.¹⁹ Archaeological evidence elsewhere in Lynn has backed this up and shown how much land has been taken in from the river over the centuries, whether by silting-up or by deliberate reclamation; the results are usefully summarised in Sarah Bates' Figure 1 (Fig. 8), which updates Helen Clarke's plan from 1973.²⁰ In the 13th century, as reconstructed by Rutledge and Rutledge from the survey of the *Newe Lond* they suspect was made in 1279 (Fig. 9), the shoreline seems to have been in front of St Nicholas' Chapel, running thence along what is now St Nicholas's Street and along the west side of the Tuesday Market Place; thus the whole of the Common Staithe site was then underwater.²¹ Clarke's reconstruction (Fig. 10) suggests the possibility of some buildings on the west side of the Tuesday Market Place by 1250, although with a shoreline still inland of the HAZ area.²² Late 20th-century boreholes, while not assisting with dating, can give an idea of the amount of reclamation; they have been interpreted as showing a 2.1m depth of made ground below the current surface somewhere behind the Corn Exchange (the precise location does not seem to be recorded), 8.4 m at the east end of Trinity Quay and 4.8m at the far west end of Trinity Quay.²³ Archaeological investigation might put some dates to these figures.

Medieval riverside embankments might be made for a number of reasons, and, as Dyson has warned, care must be taken not to make assumptions from the word quay or wharf; it might mean a docking or landing place, but equally it might mean protecting land from the river or deliberate land reclamation.²⁴ It may or may not be that 'staithe' is more precise.

No archaeological investigations have been made in the Common Staithe area except rather inconclusive ones under the Corn Exchange.²⁵ The earliest pieces of evidence for building west of the Tuesday Market Place are the pointed-arched arcade (discussed further below) which was formerly part of the demolished building between 21 Tuesday Market Place and the Globe, and a 14th-century vaulted brick cellar under the northern part of 18 Tuesday Market Place (on the corner of Paige Stair Lane).²⁶ It is perhaps unfortunate that neither seems to have been known to Clarke, who however cites 15th-century examples a little further south such as the St George's Guildhall buildings, the Hanseatic Steelyard and Hampton Court.²⁷

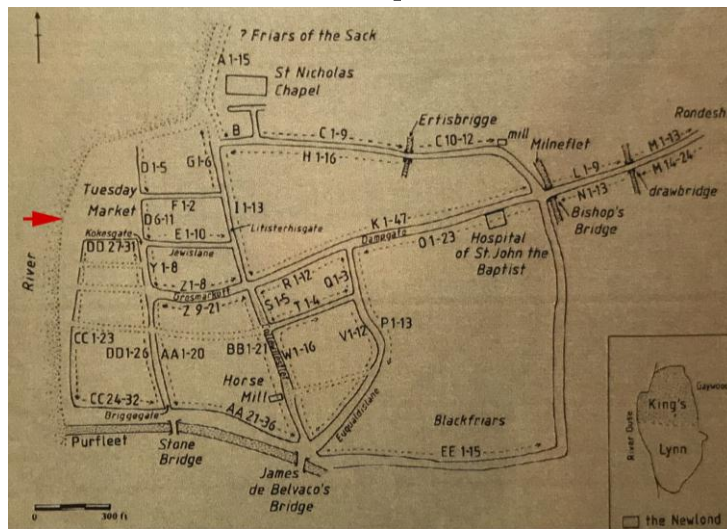
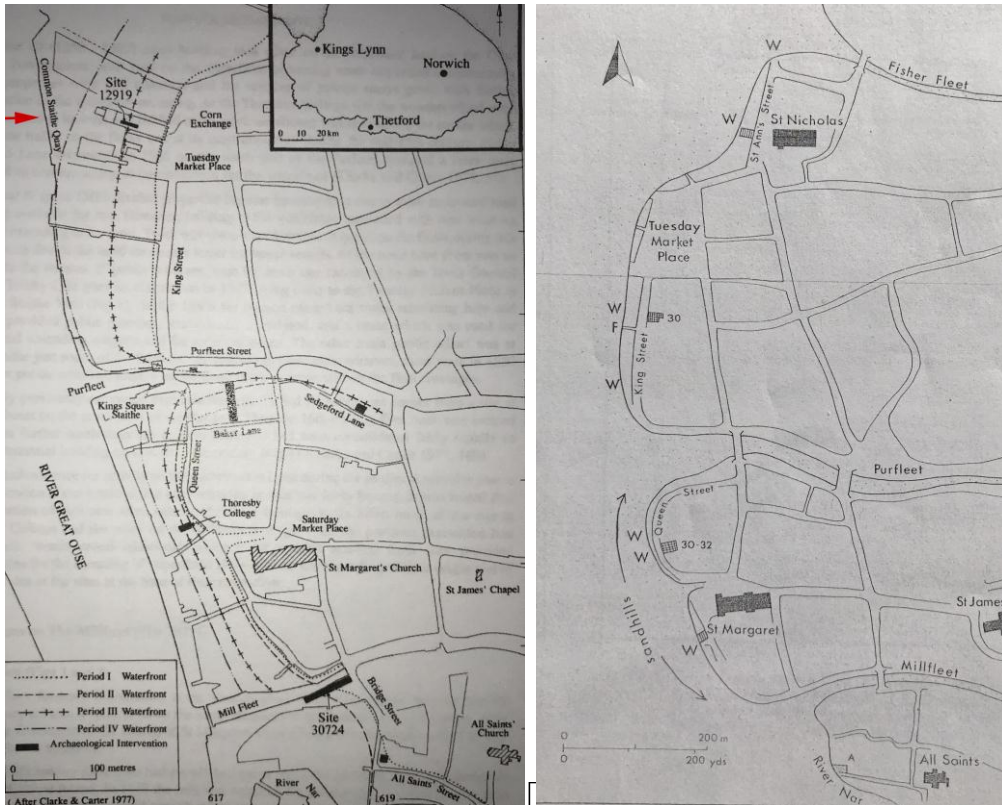


Fig. 8 (top left) Suggested lines of previous waterfronts, reconstructed by Sarah Bates; the arrow indicates the Common Staithe (S Bates 1998 'The Waterfront at King's Lynn - Recent Excavations' *Norfolk Archaeology* 43:1 31-61)

Fig. 9 (above) A reconstruction by Rutledge and Rutledge of the Newe Lond c. 1279; the arrow marks the position of the Common Staithe, then underwater (Rutledge, E and P 1978 'King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth, Two Thirteenth-century Surveys' *Norfolk Archaeology* 37-1 92-114)

Fig. 10 (top right) Clarke's reconstruction of the shoreline c 1250, showing some minimal reclamation west of the Tuesday Market Place. (Clarke H 1981 'The medieval waterfront of King's Lynn' in Gustav Milne and Brian Hobley (eds), *CBA Research Report no. 41: Waterfront Archaeology in Britain and Northern Europe* 132-35)

It is likely that the early development of the area would parallel that a few blocks south, described by W. A. Pantin, which was the same in other ports with extending waterfronts - long, narrow plots running down to the river, with merchants' houses on the street and yards and warehouses at right angles behind.²⁸ Vanessa Parker believes that the Common Staithe was set out with at least some warehouses by the middle of the 16th century.²⁹

2.2 THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

The earliest plan of the site (and indeed of Lynn in any detail) is Wenceslas Hollar's, dated by David Higgins to c. 1660; it includes a prospect from the river showing the Common Staithe Yard (Fig. 11). It was more or less copied by Henry Bell in various versions over the ensuing decades (Figs 12 and 13).³⁰ Bell also produced two prints of the Tuesday Market Place showing the east frontage of the Common Staithe complex, one c. 1675 and the other c. 1687 (Fig. 14).³¹ William Rastrick's plan (dated 1725) shows the Common Staithe Yard in a more schematic form (Fig. 15).

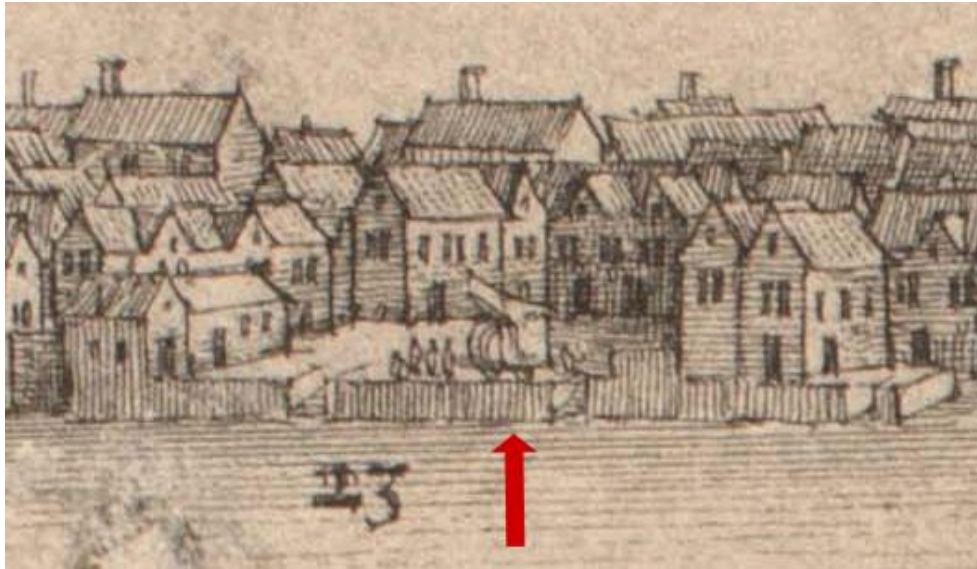


Fig. 11 The Common Staithe from the river c 1660, showing it as a roughly square space, open on the river side. The arrow points to the crane. From Wencelass Hollar's prospect of Lynn attached to his map. Norfolk Museums Service (Lynn Museum)



Fig. 12 Henry Bell's plan of King's Lynn 1670. The arrow marks the Common Staithe. Norfolk Record Office BL 4/3



Fig. 13 The Common Staithe Yard c 1670, from Henry Bell's town plan. Note the quay at the bottom, the crane above it in the centre, and the lack of uniformity among the buildings. Norfolk Record Office BL 4/3.

These are broadly backed up by the rental rolls and leases which in part survive. The Common Staithe took the form of a courtyard, enclosed on the north, east and south but on the west open to the river, to which two flights of steps led down. This U-shape can also be seen, although much narrower, at St George's Guildhall (Fig. 16) a little to the south of the site, and at the Steelyard (the Hanseatic merchants' premises) further south still; it is noteworthy that these two, like the Common

Staithe, were public or corporate rather than private establishments.³² In London some large houses were left to livery companies for halls, and in the absence of documentary evidence as to how the Trinity Guild acquired the Common Staithe, it is possible that something like that happened here.³³ However a document Dorothy Owen dates to c. 1577 refers not just to Pudding Lane (now Water Street, along the north side of the Corn Exchange) but Pudding Wharf, implying a separate quay and suggesting that the Common Staithe complex may then have been a little narrower than later.³⁴ There is evidence from London that as the Middle Ages went on private alleys leading to the river sometimes became public as a result of time and custom.³⁵



Fig. 14 The Tuesday Market Place c 1687, showing on the left the east front of the buildings on the Common Staithe. The section with the loggia was the Custom House. From a print by Henry Bell. Norfolk Museums Service (Lynn Museum).

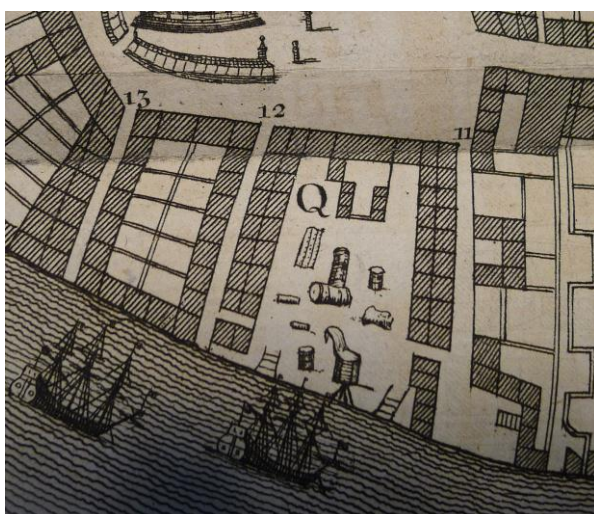


Fig 15 The Common Staithe in 1725, rendered schematically in a detail of William Rastrick's *Ichnographia burgi perantiqui Lennae Regis* 1725. Note the crane and the various bits of merchandise in the Common Staithe Yard. Norfolk Museums Service (Lynn Museum)



Fig. 16 St George's Guildhall, between King Street and the river; note the use of stone at lower level in the buildings. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 5-JUL-2017 ©Historic England

Although the accounts are incomplete, Parker suggests that the Corporation rebuilt the Common Staithe over the half century starting in the 1580s (the frontage seems to have dated from 1612-23).³⁶ The east side faced onto the Tuesday Market Place and the north and south onto Pudding Lane and Common Staithe Lane respectively. There were entrances at the north and south ends of the east front and near the west ends of the two lanes; early on there was also a main central gateway from the Tuesday Market Place.³⁷ Most of the complex consisted of warehouses which were double in two ways; most were two-storey (the upstairs being described as a 'chamber', but clearly for goods, not people), and both the north and south wings were like back-to-back houses, with both north- and south-facing units on each wing. The inward-facing units seem all to have been warehouses but some of the outward-facing ones may have been cottages (initially for workers in the area – porters, boatmen, etc).³⁸ The 'intact surface of bricks' found during the Corn Exchange excavations probably relates to a ground-floor unit.³⁹ There was a public coalyard at the west end of the Common Staithe Lane.⁴⁰

In the east wing of the complex was a custom house and various premises related to the market, such as a room for the court of pie powder (as market courts were called). At the north-east corner, where the front of the Corn Exchange now stands, was the Angel Inn (Fig. 17), and at the south-east, north of the Globe Hotel, there was a house facing the Tuesday Market Place (it was rented in the 19th century by

the Smetham family and hence will be referred to as Smetham's House) (Fig. 18).⁴¹ Bell's print of 1687 (see Fig. 14) shows an elaborate east front, two and a half storeys high and with eight bays and gables visible as well as two double gates. The first-floor windows are all topped with triangular pediments. The southernmost section of frontage is not shown, but was almost certainly two further bays and gables. The sixth 'gable' from the north is elaborately shaped like a frontispiece and incorporates a large niche, and below it and the gable each side of it is what looks like an open wooden loggia; if the number of bays surmised is correct, this feature was not central.

Bell's plan and the prospects from the west show a rather less regular position between this frontage and the river, with some buildings facing north-south and some (more) east-west. The evidence of the pointed-arched arcade proves that at least some of the complex was a survival from much earlier. One building shown on some of the prospects looks a little like a lighthouse and is marked as the Ship Chamber, from which shipping could be watched entering and leaving the harbour. It was rebuilt in 1682, but in 1773 a replacement was fitted up a little further north by the Elizabethan St Anne's Fort at the mouth of the Fisher Fleet (Fig. 19).⁴²

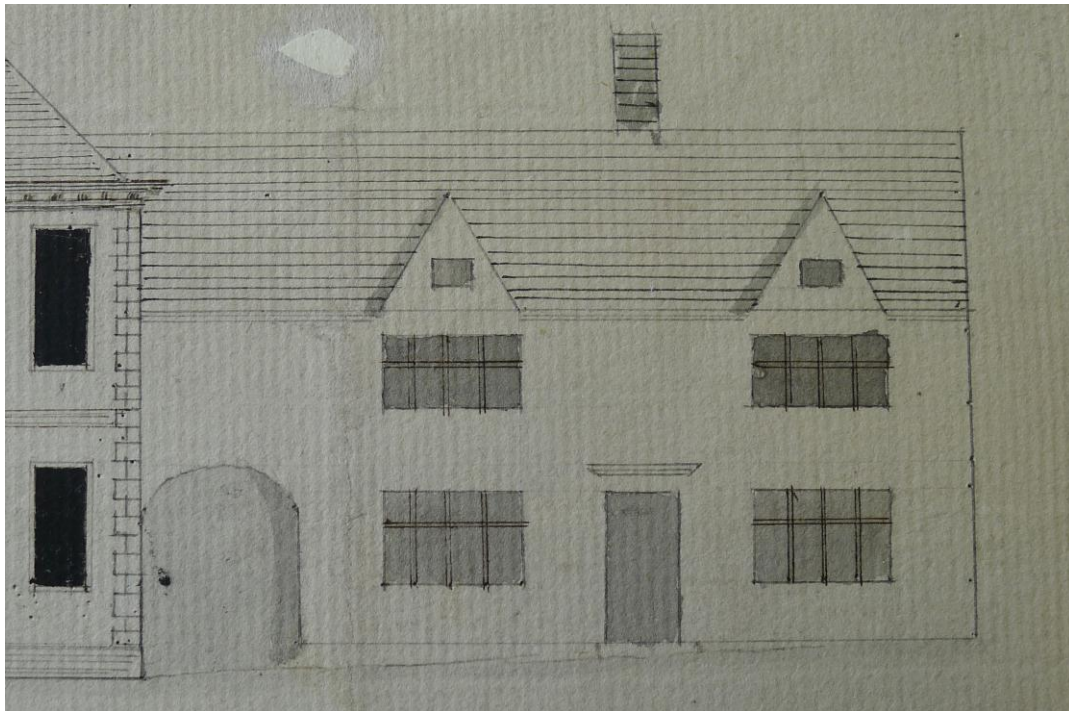


Fig. 17 The Angel Inn seen from the Tuesday Market Place, in or after 1736. Norfolk Record Office BL 5/14

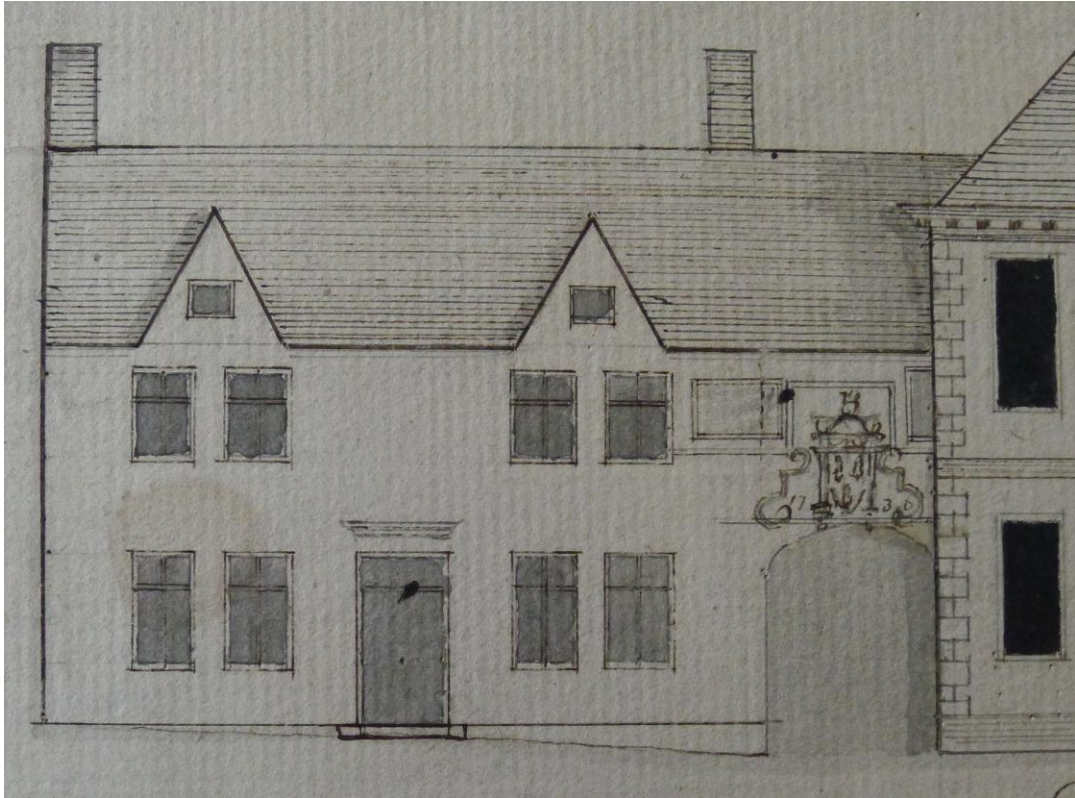


Fig. 18 The house on the Tuesday Market Place referred to in this report as Smetham's House after a later occupant, seen here in a drawing dating from 1736 or later. What is now Ferry Street (then Common Staithe Lane) ran down by the left-hand gable, and on the right is one of the gates into the Common Staithe Yard. Norfolk Record Office BL 5/14



Fig. 19 The Pilot Office at St Anne's Fort, probably an early 19th century view. Norfolk Museums Service (Lynn Museum)

What is not clear from the plans and prospects is what materials the structures were built of. Vanessa Parker records a reference to the use of brick by the Corporation for new warehouses and cottages on the Common Staithe in 1605, and believes all were brick, with the chambers being plastered to allow the storage of grain.⁴³

These early plans and prospects all show a quay forming the western boundary of the Common Staithe. It remained in use as the quay until most of the foreshore was reclaimed, and a new sea wall built further west, in about 1960 (Fig. 20). It still survives, the southern portion fully visible and indeed functioning, the northern three-quarters buried, except for the top kerb, in the car park. It is brick with stone dressings (Fig. 21).



Fig. 20 An aerial view of the Common Staithe from the south-west in 1930, showing how the foreshore had silted up, leaving only the southernmost part of the quay in use. Detail of HEA (Aerofilms Collection) EPW031687 1930.



Fig. 21 The south-west corner of the old Common Staithe Quay, brick with stone dressings. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 3-JUL-2017 ©Historic England

Bates suggests, on the basis of the 1995 Corn Exchange excavations,⁴⁴ that in the 14th and 15th centuries the excavation site was still under the river, and that that there were no quays or jetties, the foreshore being used only by small vessels at low tide; reclamation was not deliberate but the result of throwing rubbish into the river (a practice which was widespread although prohibited).⁴⁵ Documentary evidence also shows the deliberate importation of clay in the late thirteenth/early fourteenth century to raise the level of Lynn's quays.⁴⁶ The other possibilities, summarised by Gustav Milne from the results of excavations at many British ports, were 'A to win land/B to provide a deep water berth/C to overcome the problems of silting/D to maintain a sound frontage.'⁴⁷ B was important as late medieval ships had got bigger.⁴⁸ Bates also argues that the presence on the site of a bell-casting pit, probably early 17th-century, means that the whole area was restricted to 'urban trade and small-scale industrial activity, but this seems to be disproved by the archival evidence, and she herself cautions that much archaeology may have been lost as a result of the digging of 17th- and 18th-century cellars.⁴⁹ It is possible (although no more than a hypothesis) that when the Corporation took the Common Staithe in hand in at the beginning of Elizabeth I's reign they may have reclaimed an amount of land and built the first brick or stone quay in the area.⁵⁰ Wilfrid J. Wren argues that by about 1550 there was no free space on any fluvial frontage, and all that happened thereafter was that warehouses and quays were reconstructed.⁵¹ We know that the quay was extensively repaired in 1784-85 at a cost of £94.12.6, using a mixture of 'Ely Bricks' and 'Kiln Bricks'.⁵²

There was also subterranean storage under the Common Staithe; in 1870 there was a bonding vault behind Smetham's House (possibly the building with the medieval arches referred to below), and in examining a drain in a subterranean passage leading out of it, three large vaults were discovered, extending under what would previously have been the open yard of the Common Staithe complex (but which by then was the garden of 21 Tuesday Market Place, the house generally referred to as Gurney's). They were vaulted with red brick and measured respectively 50ft x 18ft, 53ft x 6ft and 36ft x 18ft, with small arches connecting them.⁵³ They may be the 'vaults and cellars sunk and made' under the warehouses acquired by John Turner in 1711, although there is anecdotal evidence of cellars extending out from Gurney's under the Tuesday Market Place in the mid-twentieth century.⁵⁴ Either these or other vaults on the site of Smetham's House exercised the minds of the Corporation when trying to decide what to do with the area after the Great War; in 1925 builders were invited to tip dry rubble into them, but this was not taken up to a sufficient extent, as the Borough Surveyor was instructed to have them filled in himself; it is possible therefore that they still survive in some form, albeit full of rubble or other material.⁵⁵

2.3 THE GEORGIAN PERIOD

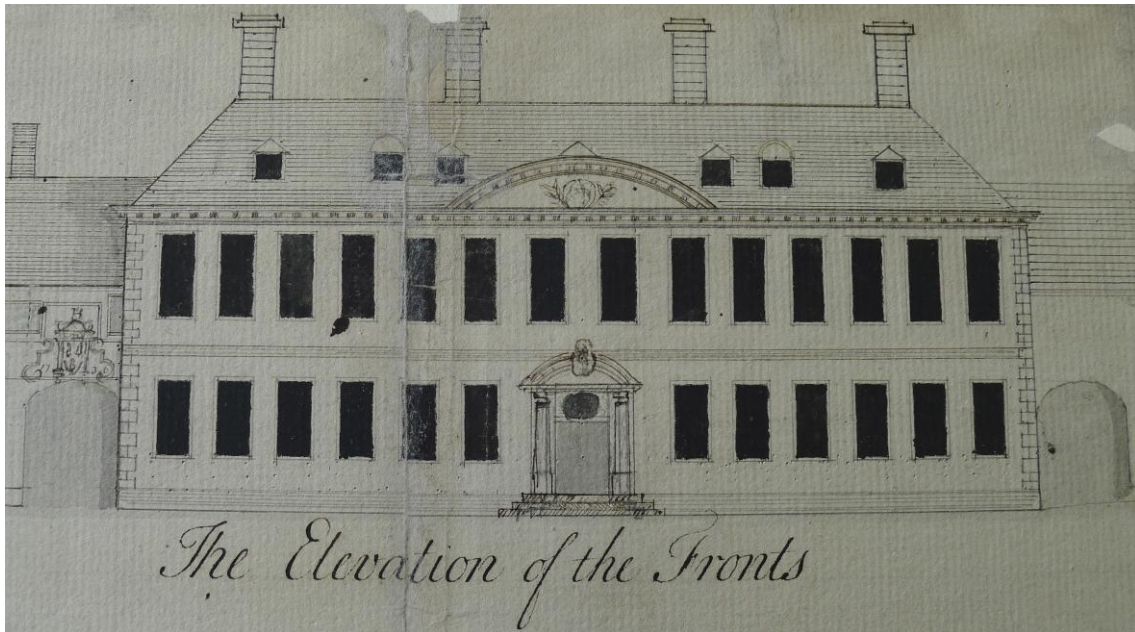


Fig. 22 The east front of the house built at the east end of the Common Staithe Yard by Charles Turner, here in a view of 1736 or later. Norfolk Record Office BL 5/14

What has just been described was the 17th-century form of the Yard – the Common Staithe in all its pomp, one might say. The first change to this seems to have been the removal of the Customs in about 1703 to the new Custom House (still standing at King’s Staithe Yard).⁵⁶ The old Custom House was then acquired by a prominent local attorney, Charles Turner, who had been living next door since 1680, giving him the whole central part of the east wing between the gates (but not the Angel to the north or Smetham’s House to the south). He pulled it down and built a substantial town house on the site;⁵⁷ it was ‘lately built’ in 1711.⁵⁸

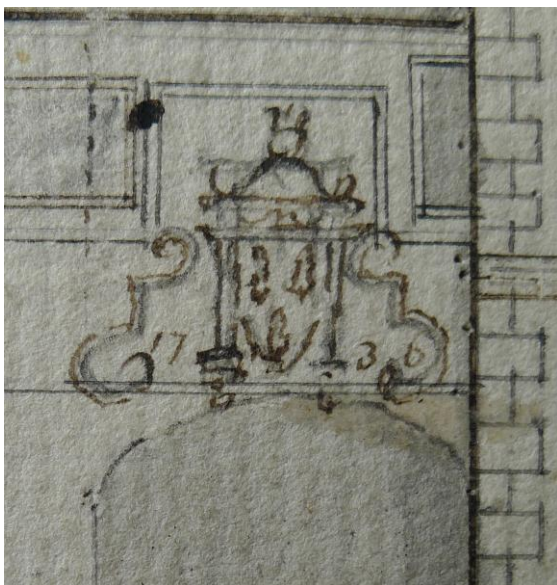


Fig 23 The arms of Lynn over the southern gateway from the Tuesday Market into the Common Staithe Yard. Norfolk Record Office BL 5/14

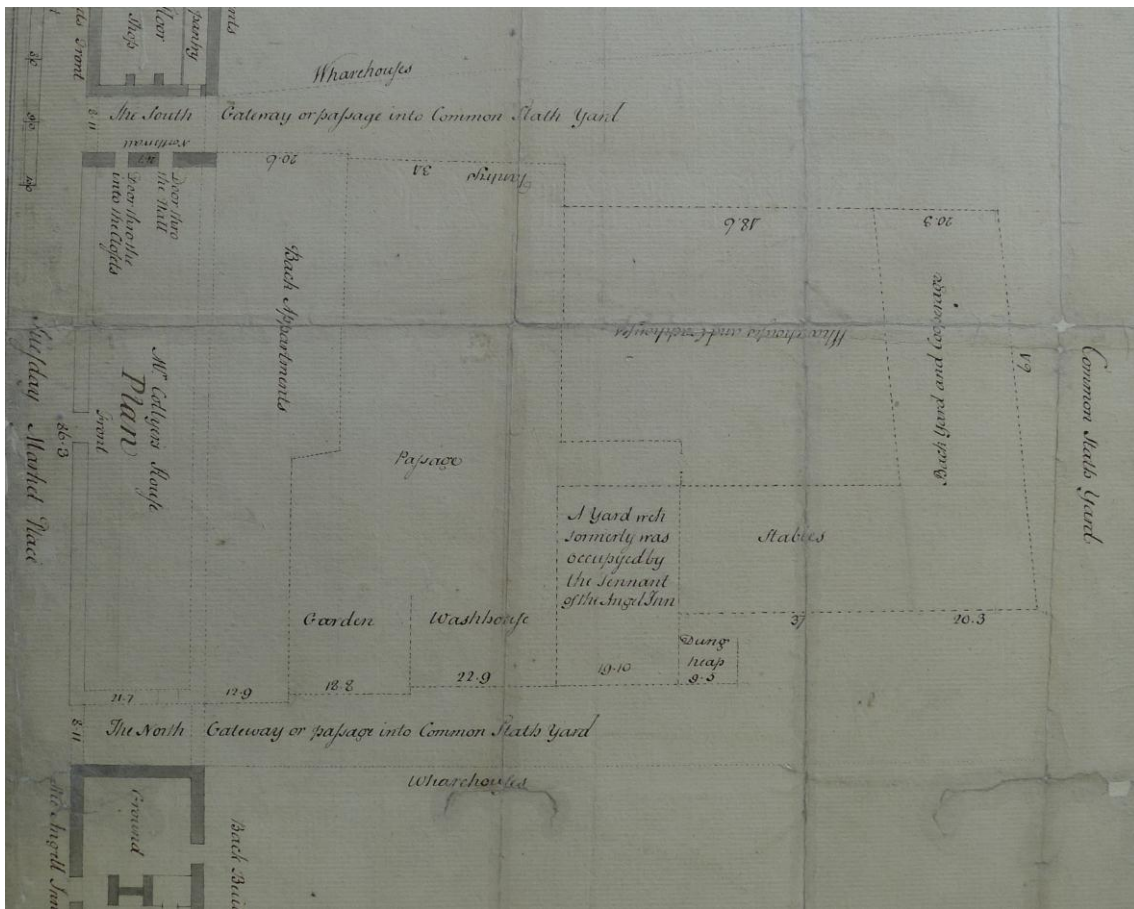


Fig 24 The layout in or after 1736 of the east end of the Common Staithe, by then part of the grounds of the big house fronting onto the Tuesday Market Place. Norfolk Record Office BL 5/14

A drawing of what is indubitably this house survives, 'Mr Collyer's House', presumably after a subsequent owner (Fig. 22).⁵⁹ It is undated, but the cartouche above the south entrance passage with the arms of Lynn has the date 1736 (Fig. 23). It was a grand house, thirteen bays and 86' 3" wide,⁶⁰ and two and a half storeys high, the first floor with taller windows than the ground floor, and so clearly the *piano nobile*. There is an imposing central doorway with columns supporting a segmental pediment. It is presumably brick, with quoins and a plat band. Above a prominent cornice is a central segmental pediment, much like the one still to be seen today on the Duke's Head Hotel opposite. The arrangement of the dormers is odd, suggesting an unpractised hand, and the pediment appears, bizarrely, to have a gable above it.⁶¹ The drawing has no floor plan or other elevations for the main house, but does include for the flanking buildings (Smetham's House and the Angel) not only east elevations but also ground floor plans.

Turner had also acquired what seem to have been the easternmost warehouses on the Common Staithe, creating a plot deeper (east-west) than wide; his land was divided from the Yard by a post-and-rail fence.⁶² The Collyer plan sets this out and shows that while there was a small garden, there was also a washhouse, pantries, stables, coachhouses, warehouses, cooperage and a dung heap. (Fig. 24). This house burned down and was rebuilt for George Hogg, a merchant, in 1768; that is essentially the building which survives at the south-west corner of the Tuesday Market Place today.⁶³ (Fig. 25).



Fig. 25 The house George Hogg built in 1768 on the site of Turner's house; it was re-fronted in the 1950s. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 3-MAY-2017 ©Historic England

In 1799-1800 Hogg acquired more land to add to his garden; part was of rounded outline and is presumably the area east of the cannon now in use as a bollard, while in 1831, after the demolitions referred to below, the then Alderman Hogg rented and enclosed what seems to have been another piece of ground rounding off his garden (Fig 26).⁶⁴

The Common Staithe was still one of the three main wharves of the town in the 18th century, and the remaining, more westerly, warehouses remained in use into the 19th century (they were repaired in 1805).⁶⁵ Despite the loss of the east range, the rear pediment of Gurney's would have maintained a certain architectural cohesiveness to the space, the general form of which can be seen on late eighteenth-century maps (Fig. 27).⁶⁶



Fig. 26 Looking north from Ferry Street, showing the rounded corner of the wall enclosing the former Gurney's premises, later Barclays Bank; note the cannon, which is on the NHLE Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 2-MAY-2017 ©Historic England



Fig 27 The Common Staithe in the late 18th century, showing the northern range (marked with a blue arrow), the southern range (marked with a green arrow) and Gurney's, marked with a red arrow). Detail of a map, catalogued at Norfolk Record Office as late 18th century and having strong similarities to Faden's map of 1797. Norfolk Record Office BL 4/5

The Corporation Rental of 1766, set out below, gives an idea of what the Common Staithe was then like.⁶⁷ Some numbers are missing from the enumeration of the Yard (probably representing those by then attached to the Gurney property) but even so, there were still some thirty units including the four cottages on the lane. Vanessa Parker suggests that when the 17th-century rebuilding was complete, there were nine warehouses on the south side and seven on the north. If each of these consisted of two units (a ground-floor warehouse and upper chamber), this is reasonably consistent.⁶⁸

King's Lynn Corporation Rental 1766 (extract)

Number /name	Location	Description	Tenant	Rent p.a.
2	Common Staithe Yard	chamber	John Darney the elder	2.0.0
2	Common Staithe Lane	warehouse and chamber over	Richard Laurence	2.10.0
3	Common Staithe Yard	chamber	Robert Teel	1.0.0
9	Common Staithe Yard	warehouses and vaults	Benjamin Nuthal Esq	5.0.0
10	Common Staithe Yard	chamber over 8 and the four 9s	Benjamin Nuthal Esq	2.20.0
11 and 12	Common Staithe Yard	warehouse with double doors	Edward Everard Esq	2.0.0
13	Common Staithe Yard	warehouse	Edward Everard Esq	5.10.0
14	Common Staithe Yard	warehouse	Edward Everard Esq	5.0.0
15	Common Staithe Yard	warehouse	John Oakden	3.0.0
16	Common Staithe Yard	warehouse	Geo Hogg gent	3.0.0
17	Common Staithe Yard	chamber	Ralph Lewis	3.0.0
18	Common Staithe Yard	chamber	Ralph Lewis	2.0.0

19	Common Staithe Yard	warehouse	John Oakden	3.10.0
20	Common Staithe Yard	warehouse	Benjamin Nuthal & Co	4.0.0
21	Common Staithe Yard	chamber	John Darney the elder	
22	Common Staithe Yard	warehouse	Benjamin Nuthal & Co	4.0.0
23	Common Staithe Lane	warehouse	Edmund Elsdon gent	4.10.0
25	Common Staithe Yard	chamber	James Robertson Esq	4.0.0
31	Common Staithe Yard	chamber	Edward Everard Esq	3.10.0
33 and 34	Common Staithe Yard	warehouse	Edward Everard Esq	6.0.0
95 (recte 35?)	Common Staithe Yard	warehouse and vault	Benjamin Nuthal Esq	3.0.0
36	Common Staithe Yard	chamber	Edward Everard Esq	2.0.0
37	Common Staithe Yard	chamber	John Lockett	2.0.0
38	Common Staithe Yard	warehouse	Edward Everard Esq	5.0.0
39	Common Staithe Yard	warehouse and vault	Benjamin Nuthal Esq	3.0.0
	Common Staithe Lane	dwelling-house	Benjamin Canham	4.0.0
	Common Staithe Lane	dwelling-house	Robert Raby	2.0.0
	Common Staithe Lane	dwelling-house	Elizabeth Stow	4.0.0
	Common Staithe	dwelling-house	Thomas Skelton	2.0.0

	Lane			
Angel Inn	Tuesday Market Place	inn	William and Thomas Bagge	17.0.0
	Tuesday Market Place	Shambles	John Streaun	17.10.0
	Tuesday Market Place	[Smeetham's house]	Benjamin Nuthal Esq	12.10.0

A terrier of 1809 (a list of Corporation lands) shows some thirty-six units, including some in hand which would not be included in a rental. It does not give numbers to the units, but does give names, among them a lime house, a wine vault, a wool chamber, two sand warehouses, the fish market, the meter's office and the guard room.⁶⁹ What must have been the final full year of rentals before demolition, 1827-28, shows five dwelling-houses, three vaults, nine chambers, a lime house, a wool chamber, four sand houses, an oil warehouse (let to the Paving Commissioners, so presumably lamp oil), seven other warehouses, a shop, the meter's office, the Angel Inn, the coach house and stables for 18 Tuesday Market Place, and a guard room.⁷⁰ A full detailed reconstruction of the 17th- and 18th-century complex is, however, beyond the scope of this report.

2.4 EARLY-19TH-CENTURY TRANSFORMATION



Fig. 28 The Tuesday Market Place, looking north, in 1797 by J Butcher. On the far left is Gurney's, and then the Angel Inn. Straight ahead is the domed market cross. Norfolk Museums Service (Lynn Museum)

The Common Staithe was transformed in the second quarter of the 19th century. The driver seems to have been dissatisfaction with the facilities for the market. The elaborate Baroque market cross of 1707-10 (rather like a miniature version of the Radcliffe Camera at Oxford) was in a state of disrepair; around it were clustered the shambles (Fig. 28). Various proposals came before the Corporation, notably to demolish the Angel Inn and move the shambles to its site (rejected in 1820 but revived in 1826), or alternatively to retain the current site but replace the cross with new shambles with public rooms over (approved in 1820 but abandoned). Finally in 1828 the Corporation offered the Angel site for a new market hall; with the sanction of a private Act of Parliament, the old inn and most of the warehouses behind it were duly demolished and a neat, pedimented market house built to the designs of John Donthorn, with a fish market behind (Fig. 29). The changes effected can be seen by comparing Wood's plan of 1830 (Fig. 30) with another of about three decades earlier (see Fig. 27).

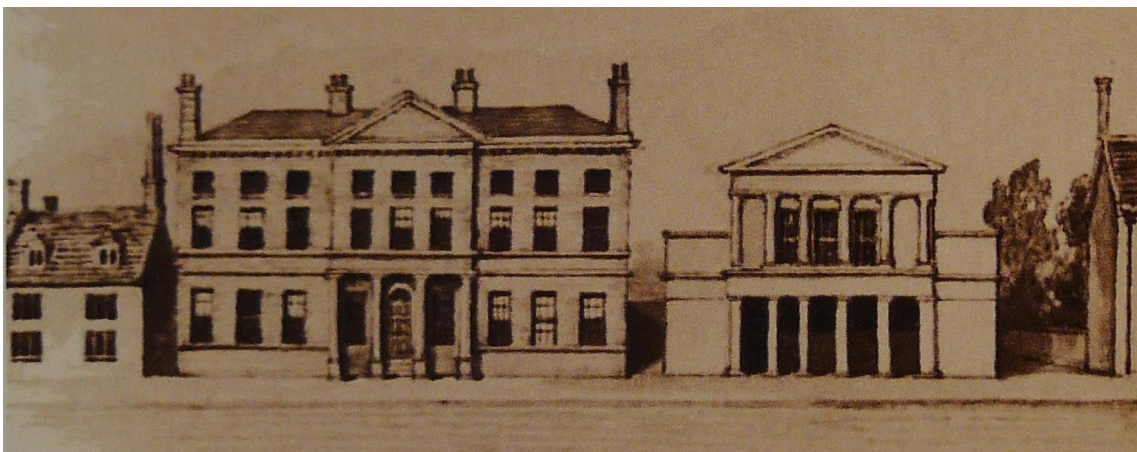


Fig. 29 The new Market Hall (on the right), erected in 1828 to the designs of John Donthorn. A drawing by William Taylor. From Paul Richards, *King's Lynn* (Phillimore 1990)

In 1853-54 the front part of the Market Hall was demolished and replaced with a Corn Exchange, its façade (which survives) a wonderful evocation of an Italian Baroque church, although attached originally to a metal-roofed shed (Fig. 31).⁷¹

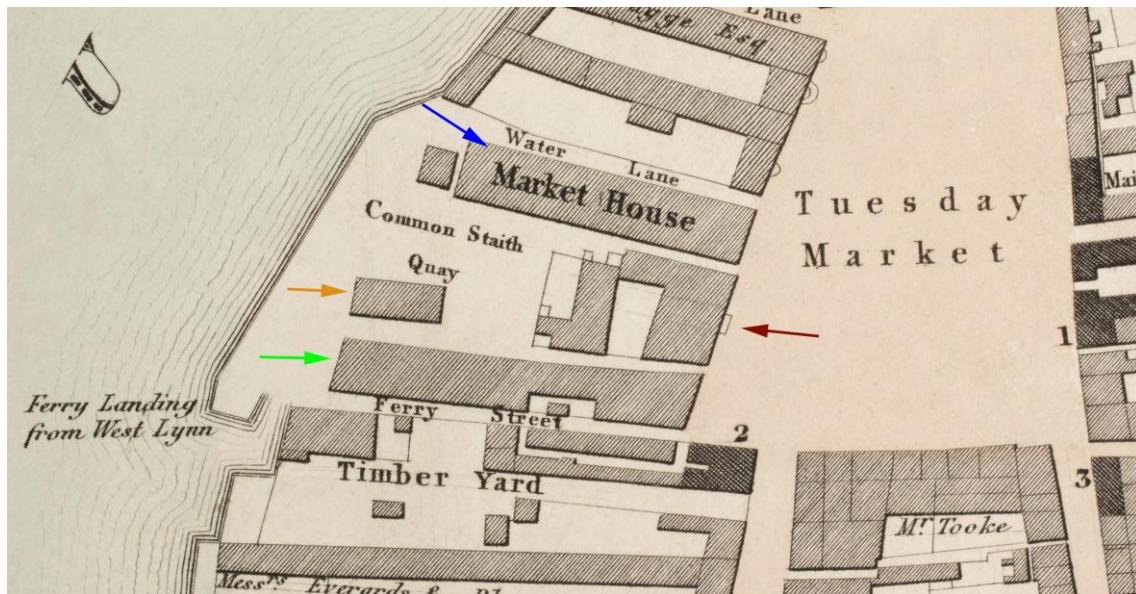


Fig. 30. The Common Staithe in 1830, showing the new Market House or Market Hall (marked with a blue arrow), which had replaced the old north range; the south range, largely surviving (marked with a green arrow); Gurney's (marked with a red arrow); and the new 1829 warehouse in the middle of the yard (marked with an orange arrow). From John Wood's plan. Norfolk Museums Service (Lynn Museum) KILLM 2011/33



Fig. 31 The Corn Exchange by Cruso and Mabberley from the Tuesday Market Place.
Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 3-MAY-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 32 The Fire Brigade on the Common Staithe in 1939, in front of the surviving back part of the Market Hall. Norfolk Museums Service (Lynn Museum) KILLM 2008 303



Fig. 33 An aerial view of the Common Staithe in 1952, showing the metal tower and other buildings added to the Market Hall for Fire Brigade use. Detail of HEA (Aerofilms Collection) AFL62343/EAW044459 27-JUN-1952

The back part of the Market Hall was used as a fire station by 1883 (Fig. 32), and a tower and further building erected to its south (Fig. 33).⁷² The Fire Station and most of the Exchange were in turn demolished in 1994-96 and replaced by a red brick and steel arts centre which now dominates the view from the river.⁷³ Instead of the old gated yard, lanes thereafter led into the Common Staithe on either side of the Corn Exchange – to the north, Water Lane (narrowed when the Exchange was built) and on the south, where the north gates to the Yard had stood between the Angel and the Custom House, what a Victorian source called River Lane.⁷⁴

The demolition of the Angel left surviving from the 17th-century east front of the site only Smetham's House. The gates and the rooms and roofs above them (see Figs 17 and 18) seem to have been removed when Hogg's house was built in 1768. Victorian photographs of Smetham's show a building which looks very like the representations in Fig. 18 with the front gable removed and the windows fitted with sashes.

The site required for the new Market House in 1828 was not just that of the Angel but also that of the warehouses behind - in other words the whole, or nearly the whole, north arm of the Common Staithe complex between Pudding Lane/Water Street and the Yard. However, the new building was much the same in massing as the old, and so the overall appearance of the Yard changed less than might at first sight have been expected.



Fig. 34 The Fish Cross, later the Meter's Office, the one part of the old north range of the Common Staithe which survived the demolitions of the late 1820s, finally pulled down in 1967; it is the pantiled building behind the firemen in Fig. 32. Photograph by George King, 1963. Norfolk Library and Information Service (King's Lynn Library Archives)

One part of the range appears to have survived; what was called the Fish Cross was ordered in 1830 to be put into repair by hipping the roofs and enclosing the space between it and the new Market Hall.⁷⁵ This seems to have been the single-storey building, used at some stage as the office of the market official called the meter. It

appears in old photographs with two roofs running east-west, pantiled and hipped at the west end (Fig. 34); it was demolished in 1967.⁷⁶

The south range is more complicated. In 1829 the materials of various Common Staithe warehouses, due for demolition, were put up for auction, but frustratingly the list of lots does not appear to survive in the Corporation's archives, and so it is not clear if they were only the ones on the north side or whether anything on the south was included as well. Some warehouses seem to have been demolished a little earlier, as in 1825 there was an order for the paving of the site of old warehouses 'formerly standing on the Common Staithe Quay'.⁷⁷

At this time there is specific mention of two warehouses on the south side which were not demolished: the Land Warehouse, let to Edmund Elsdon, and the Lime Warehouse, occupied by the Paving Commissioners. In 1829 the Corporation decided to build a new warehouse, for the use of the lessee of the Common Staithe tolls, whose existing warehouses were among those being demolished. After an original proposal to build it at the west end of the Land and Lime Warehouses, plans were changed so it was to be 'in a parallel line with those now in the occupation of Mr Elsdon, leaving sufficient carriageway [between]'; Wood's map of 1830 (see Fig. 30) and Burnet's of 1846 show a continuous range of buildings north of Ferry Street from the Tuesday Market Place to a line as far west as the east gable of the Crown and Mitre, and then a detached building a little north of the west part of this range, which is this new warehouse.⁷⁸



Fig. 35 The warehouses on the Common Staithe, built in 1829 (the right-hand section, up to just left of the foot door) and 1834 (the rest of the range under the same roof; the gabled building beyond is 20th century). Detail of DP 219084 28-SEP-2017 Patricia Payne ©Historic England

The 1829 warehouse (Fig. 35) was built by one William Candler on the basis that he was allowed the materials of Lots 3 and 4 in the auction, and so was probably actually built of them. As explained, no record has survived of what the various lots were, but there is mention that Candler had ‘purchased’ a wall at the west end of the Market Hall site as well as the old warehouses adjoining the Angel; it is not clear whether purchased is careless shorthand for being allowed to use them to build the new warehouse, or whether it distinguishes one lot of materials from the other.⁷⁹ The Corporation seems earlier to have seen all materials from demolished structures (including the market cross) as one resource from which the warehouses could be built and enough be left to raise the sum of £500 they were giving towards the Market Hall.⁸⁰ As will be discussed below, it is likely that this 1829 warehouse was the present Buoy Store, which incorporates some stone at high level in the south wall, something explicable only by the re-use of materials.

In 1834 an addition of thirty-four feet was made at the east end of ‘the warehouse’. This was the present Engineers’ Workshop, east of the Magazine and Buoy Store. There is a clear break in the brickwork between the two sections (Fig. 36), making the Workshop not far off 34ft long, and it does not appear to incorporate old materials in its fabric. The roof looks all one, however. In 1925 it was ordered that the slates should be stripped from it, the ridge repaired, the south side of the roof reslated with the old materials, and the north side covered with corrugated iron; presumably if this was ever carried out, the iron was later replaced with slates.⁸¹ The Engineers’ Workshop is presumably the ‘easternmost warehouse on the Common Staithe Quay’, an application to the Corporation to rent which in 1868 was turned down as it was used by ‘the Beacon’.⁸² To what extent this range was in its early years used by the Corporation and to what extent its component parts were let is unclear.



Fig. 36 The break in the brickwork between the 1829 (right) and 1834 (left) warehouses. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

2.5 THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

These buildings were an encroachment on the previously open central space of the Yard, which in the past would have been busy with merchants and seamen going to and from the various warehouses. Once this traffic had died down, it must have been a rather empty space, and this may explain an attempt in the 1850s to give it a function as an additional market, where on both the town's market days each week hides and skins could be sold toll-free.⁸³ A common privy somewhere on the Common Staithe was still in existence in 1872, when the Paving Commissioners declared it to be a nuisance.⁸⁴



Fig. 37 Detail of an oil in Lynn Museum's collection, date and artist unknown, which shows the Common Staithe from the river. The tallest building is Gurney's, with the old Market House and the taller Corn Exchange to the left. On the right the steep double gables are the southern range of the old Common Staithe, the near end soon to be demolished to make way for the Public Baths. Rather hidden behind the rigging, in front of Gurney's is the 1829 warehouse seen before the Pilot Office was added on to it. Norfolk Museums Service (Lynn Museum)

The old south range seems to have survived untouched; an undated oil in Lynn Museum (Fig. 37) shows the Common Staithe from the west and includes an end-on view of this range with a steeply-pitched M-shaped roof. There is reference in

1843 to 'Warehouse no. 4'.⁸⁵ In 1855 the west end of the range was pronounced by the Grand Jury of the Borough to be in a dangerous state, and the Corporation offered the site for proposed new public baths.⁸⁶ The offer was accepted, and the buildings were demolished, the materials sold, and the public baths (described below) constructed.⁸⁷ The accounts for the latter include an entry for 'building gable to Jary's house', presumably the cottage later called Birtledene (and described below) which had lost support when the old buildings were taken down.⁸⁸

The Baths directly abut the south side of the 1829/1834 range which, according to W. P. Burdet's plan of 1846, was separate from the old south range, thus suggesting that the Baths extend further north than the old range.⁸⁹ They do not appear to stretch quite as far south as their predecessors, as there was reference shortly after they were built to 'vacant ground' between them and Ferry Street (presumably where there is now car parking); this was dedicated to public use and paved with small cobbles.⁹⁰

References to the remaining structures are few and a little confusing. In 1856 'the warehouse' and tolls were advertised to let by the Corporation, but later the same year the Corporation received an offer to rent *one of* the warehouses.⁹¹ In 1860 the Corporation was requested to allow 'a granary' on the Common Staithe Quay to be used as a store-house for ammunition and for the Rifle Corps.⁹² A statement in 1862 that anyone shipping goods from the Common Staithe Quay had to pay tolls unless he had a warehouse there suggests there were a number of such buildings, and in 1893 a Mr Burkitt claimed a portion of the foreshore behind 'his property on the Common Staithe'; this may mean that the area to the north of the Common Staithe (now the east part of Trinity Quay) was also seen as part of the Common Staithe.⁹³ In 1865 the Town Council directed that 'further warehouse room' on the Common Staithe Quay should be made available for buoys, which were bigger than in the past; this must presumably mean by removing tenants, as there is no evidence of any building at this time. After 1859 the tolls were let without warehouses.⁹⁴

There certainly seems to have been a clear space to the west of what is now the Buoy Store (the 1829 building), as in 1863 the Corporation agreed that a new Pilot Office and Office for Mooring Dues should be built to the west end of 'the warehouse'.⁹⁵ This was required as after the change in the river's course following the opening of the Norfolk Estuary Cut, shipping coming into port was no longer visible from St Anne's Fort; it also of course restored the function to the Common Staithe after an absence of some ninety years (the Mooring Dues Office was formerly in King Street, and thus the new building united under one roof offices which had been run together since the appointment of the town's first harbourmaster in 1838).⁹⁶ This new building (described in detail below) is attached to the north side of the western section of the Baths building and the west side of the Buoy Store.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1883 (Fig. 38) shows a continuous range of buildings north of Ferry Street, running from the front of the Baths on the quay to Smetham's House on the Tuesday Market Place, and it is likely that all these east of the baths buildings were surviving medieval and 16th- or 17th-century work. An early 20th century photograph (Fig. 39) shows some of the north front of this range, including stone mullioned windows with drip moulds above. Some parts may have been the warehouse described as belonging to Smetham in 1862 (when, being on the Common Staithe, it was exempt from tolls).⁹⁷ By the time the 1904 Ordnance Survey map was surveyed (Fig. 40) the Tuesday Market Place frontage survived, but some of the range where the current public lavatories are situated had gone, including the Gothic arcade which was re-erected in St James' Gardens. Smetham's House itself was pulled down in 1910.⁹⁸

By 1928 everything in this range east of the Baths had been demolished except for the two south-facing cottages which then or later had been converted into one, called Birtledene (Figs. 41 and 42). They seem to have been occupied in 1891 and 1901 by a fisherman and his family.⁹⁹ They appear to have been of some age judging by the steepness of the roof-pitch. They were demolished by the Corporation in about 1962, except for the north wall which partly survives (see below).¹⁰⁰ A wall leading north from the west end of Birtledene, which also survives, may represent an internal wall in the inner range of warehouses on the southern side of the Common Staithe Yard.

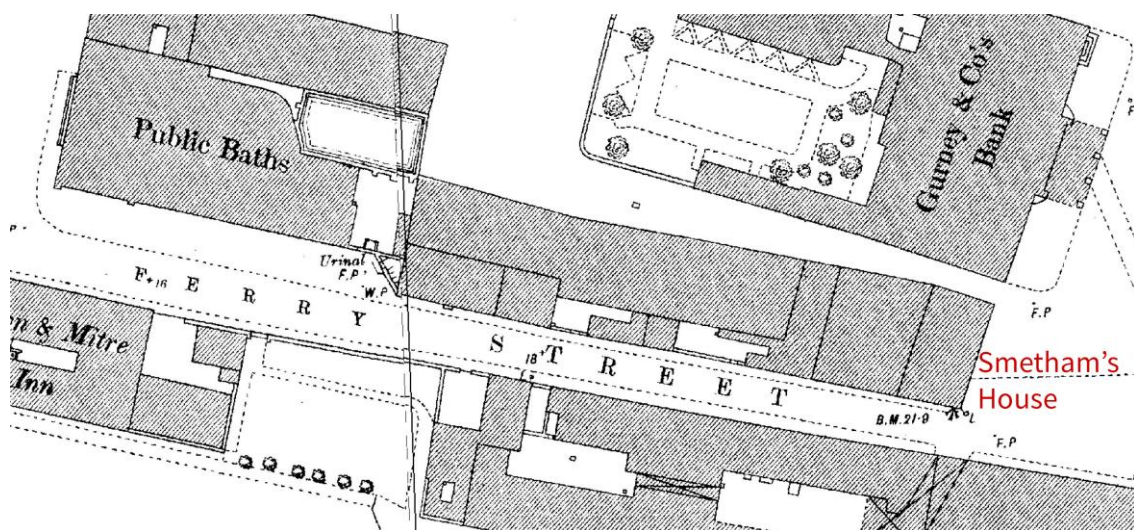


Fig. 38 The buildings north of Ferry Street shown on the 1883 Ordnance Survey map, showing a continuous range from the Baths to the Tuesday Market Place. 125" to 1 mile OS map, surveyed 1883, published 1887, taken from the Historic England corporate GIS, NTS (Historic Ordnance Survey mapping © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2018). Licence number 000394 and TP 0024



Fig. 39 The north side of the range shown on Fig. 38. Note the building on the very far right with a steep gable and mullioned windows with dripmoulds. True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum TY6136

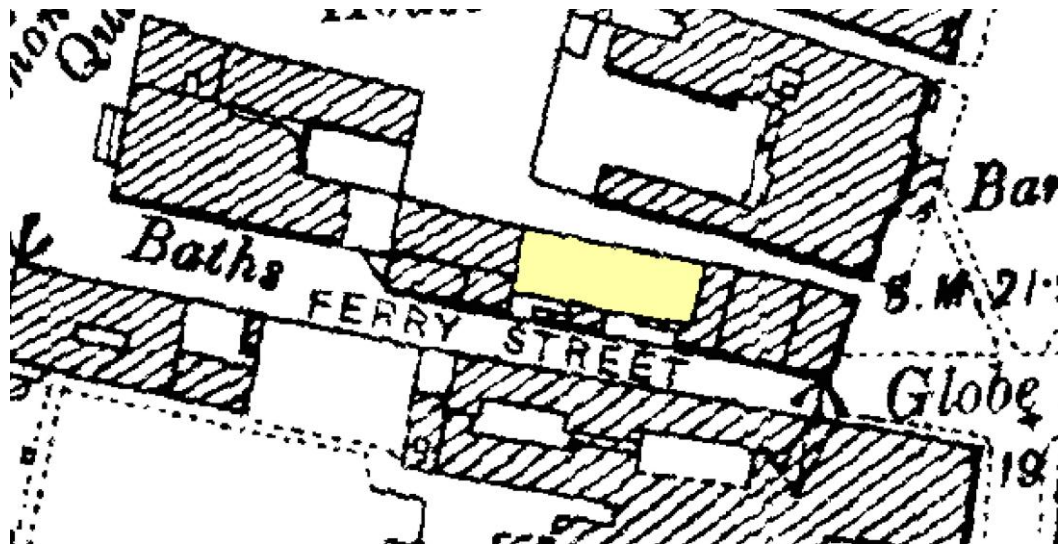


Fig. 40 The area in 1904. The buildings on the site coloured yellow had been demolished since 1883, but the buildings at the east, including Smetham's House, survived. 25" to 1 mile OS map, surveyed 1904, published 1905, taken from the Historic England corporate GIS, NTS (Historic Ordnance Survey mapping © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2018). Licence number 000394 and TP 0024



Fig. 41 The last surviving building from the south range of the Common Staithe, prior to its demolition: Birtledene, Ferry Street, from the south-west, early 1960s. Norfolk Museums Service (Lynn Museum)



Fig. 42 Birtledene, Ferry Street from the south-east, early 1960s. Norfolk Museums Service (Lynn Museum)

2.6 IMPROVEMENTS: THE PUBLIC BATHS

Like most Georgian towns, King's Lynn took advantage of enabling legislation to bring about various improvements; Paving Commissioners were constituted in 1803 and soon transformed the borough with new and improved streets. They impinged little on the Common Staithe, which was of course the property of the Corporation, although for a time they used a warehouse there. After the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 and the resulting merger of the two bodies, there was a quiet decade or so before municipal improvements began in earnest in the years immediately after the Great Exhibition of 1851. Among works carried out more or less simultaneously in the mid-1850s were the Corn Exchange of 1855, a new workhouse, a cemetery and mortuary chapel, and (although privately financed) extensive docks.



Fig. 43 The principal (west) front of King's Lynn Public Baths. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 27-FEB-2017 ©Historic England

Contemporary with these were public baths (Fig. 43). Most pre-Victorian public baths (and as Marcus Binney makes clear there were many) were intended for the middle or upper classes, who used not just the swimming pool but also the slipper baths; most middle-class houses still did not have bathrooms in the 1850s, although people bathed in front of the fire in hip-baths filled by housemaids.¹⁰¹ Even at the

beginning of the 20th century, middle-income persons might use public baths to avoid lighting a fire at home.¹⁰²

After the cholera epidemics of the 1830s cleanliness was seen as important; Lord Shaftesbury founded the Association for Promoting Cleanliness among the People in 1844.¹⁰³ The Public Health Act 1848 required reports to the Board of Health, and that for King's Lynn in 1853 was critical of insanitary conditions in parts of the town.¹⁰⁴ The Baths and Washhouses Act (known as Sir Henry Dukinfield's Act) was passed in 1846, enabling local authorities to charge a rate for the erection of public baths and wash-houses. It fixed maximum charges for users (two-thirds of the baths had to be of the cheapest class), but the baths were still intended to break even rather than being subsidised.¹⁰⁵ By 1851 (perhaps the peak year), quite a number of baths had been built under the Act – some thirty-three completed or underway nationally, according to the architects Ashpitel and Whichcord.¹⁰⁶ In Lynn the first proposal seems to have been that of one Alexander Bowker in 1849; the Corporation was wary and declined to do anything without a public meeting.¹⁰⁷

By 1853, however, a Corporation committee had been set up and was considering whether it would be justified to charge a rate.¹⁰⁸ It polled ratepayers who voted against by 459 to 33.¹⁰⁹ It should be noted that this vote was against the erection of baths under the Act, and some (or many) who voted against may have done so on the grounds that it was not the right vehicle, rather than objecting to the levying of a rate for the benefit of the poor. George Cape, secretary to the Lambeth Baths and Wash-house Company (and so not a disinterested observer), was, in a book out the next year, to advise against going down the Act route because of the restrictions it imposed, especially on charges, which might prevent the flexibility needed to remain solvent.¹¹⁰ Motivation of those supporting baths-building seems to have been mixed. The atmosphere engendered by the Dukinfield Act was one of cleansing the poor and preventing disease, but baths (and especially swimming pools) were both an attraction to local elites and a valuable source of revenue (as Cape pointed out).¹¹¹

A different way of proceeding was therefore adopted in Lynn, that of the cost being defrayed by private individuals, known as the Baths Subscribers, who would hope (perhaps optimistically) to be paid some dividends in the future. No list seems to survive, but in the end a quarter of the cost was paid by one subscriber alone, Lord Stanley, the future 15th Earl of Derby but then MP for the town.¹¹²

The Corporation assisted by making a grant of £300 and by giving the Baths Subscribers a site, that of the surviving west end of the south arm of the Common Staithe complex, recently declared dangerous by the Grand Jury of the Borough.¹¹³ It was a condition that the site would revert to the Corporation if it ceased to be used as baths, although the Subscribers could 'remove' the building.¹¹⁴ Plans and estimates were obtained from an architect in March 1855, and as the old buildings

were demolished, the contract went out to tender.¹¹⁵ Some in the town favoured a more central site, although there were precedents elsewhere for riverside locations, for example St George's Dock Baths in Liverpool, of 1826-29, also supplied with salt water.¹¹⁶

The architect selected was Thomas Oliver junior (1824-1902).¹¹⁷ He was a son of Thomas Oliver senior (1791-1857) who may have been trained by the pre-eminent Newcastle architect John Dobson, and in any event built much in that city. Thomas junior practised in Sunderland until his father's death, only then returning to Newcastle.¹¹⁸ The choice of an architect from the north-east is not entirely surprising given close trading links up the east coast. Oliver was described by the Baths Committee as having 'experience in such works', although the nature of this experience is unclear.¹¹⁹

There was disagreement over whether the building should be purely public baths (i.e. for swimming and having a bath) or whether it should also incorporate wash-houses (i.e. for clothes). There were cost implications. Oliver prepared a paper which was read out to a meeting of the Baths Subscribers in March 1855:

Gentlemen,

In pursuance of your instructions I have prepared a plan of baths and wash-houses adapted to the site on the Common Staithe Quay, on a scale commensurate with the district and population, and capable of being built for baths separately, or for baths and wash-house jointly.

The estimated cost, including engineering, for the baths according to that plan is £1,400; with wash-houses, if built at the same time, £2,000. By reducing the plan generally, and with two baths less, it could be built as a bath establishment, without salt water, for £1,200. The estimated working expenses of the bath establishment alone would be about £200 per annum; with wash-houses added, about £260 p.a. The estimated income from experience of the bath establishment only, would be about £200 p.a; with wash-houses added, about £380 p.a.

Salt water for the bath establishment would necessitate the cost of an engine to pump the water, and larger tanks and boiler, at an additional cost of £100; if with wash-houses in addition, the same. The boiler is so arranged as to obviate the necessity of extra pipes. The site affords unusual facilities for supplying the baths with salt water; but no advantage would be gained by supplying only a portion of the baths with salt water and the remainder with fresh water. It is proposed to pump the water direct into the swimming bath for a given time daily, and into large supply tanks, filled about high tide daily, for the slipper baths.

No additional outlay, with the exception of two small cisterns for hot and cold water, would be necessary in order to add the wash-houses to the baths establishment supplied by salt water, as the steam from the boiler would serve to supply the wash-house as well as the baths. The value of the receipts would

necessarily be increased, and greater attractiveness given to the baths, by making them all of salt water; and revenue would become a source of profit by the addition of wash-houses.

I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant

Thomas Oliver, Jun.

Sunderland, March 5th, 1855

To the Committee of the Lynn Baths and Wash-houses'

He is also recorded as having communicated some further points: that the cost of an engine to pump sea-water would be less than hand pumping or the price of fresh water, and that it would save £100 to build wash-houses straight away rather than later.¹²⁰

These figures can be tabulated as follows:

	£
Cost with wash-houses	2,000
Cost without wash-houses	1,400
Cost without wash-houses and with economies on the baths	1,200
Estimated profit and loss	
With wash-houses	
Estimated income	380
Annual maintenance costs	<u>260</u>
Estimated profit	120
Without wash-houses	
Estimated income	200
Annual maintenance costs	<u>200</u>
Estimated profit	Nil

The subscribers and their committee see-sawed between the options, and contemplated borrowing using the site and buildings as security,¹²¹ but in the end the decision was against wash-houses.¹²² When tenders closed, there were only two, both for well over the architect's final estimate. The specifications were reduced and the lower tenderer, John Stimpson, was awarded the contract and completed the building by summer the next year; the Baths opened in July 1856.¹²³ They were cheap because they were so small – the total cost was £1,347.12.0. for a swimming pool and ten private baths.¹²⁴ Maidstone cost £4,848 for a pool the same size but with three times the number of baths.¹²⁵ Bilston cost £2,200 for more than double the number of baths and a wash-house.¹²⁶

The Baths consisted of one large swimming bath, three shower baths, three first-class private slipper baths, five second-class private slipper baths, an engine room and a superintendent's house; the original plans were described as also including a boiler, an engine to pump water, and large supply tanks.¹²⁷ Four of the slipper baths and the swimming bath were supplied with sea water.¹²⁸ The pool held about 30,000 gallons and when later supplied from the mains was recorded as taking three hours to fill.¹²⁹

The accommodation is comparable with similar establishments elsewhere; Laing and Laing describe those put up under the 1846 Act as having

one or two plunge- or swimming baths, a number of private or slipper-baths (some of superior character), a wash-house or laundry with a separate entrance, boiler-rooms in the basement, and accommodation for a superintendent. In the bigger establishments there were first- and second-class baths, and men and women reached separate baths by their own entrances. In the smaller baths, the sexes and classes bathed at different hours or on alternate days.¹³⁰

The Baths were open on Sundays from 6 am to 9 am and on all other days from 6 am to 10 pm. Women could come only between 8 am and 4 pm, but it is unclear whether they had exclusive use of the whole Baths then or just access to some private baths. Tickets lasted only for half an hour, and anyone staying longer had to pay for a fresh session. The original scale of charges, which included two towels in first class, one in second but none if swimming, was:

Annual Tickets

First class baths (shower or slipper)	15s.
Second class baths	10s.
Swimming baths Any day	7s.6d.
Second-class days only	3s.6d.

Ordinary tickets

Private baths	First Class	Salt water	Warm	1s.
			Cold	9d.
	Second class	Fresh water	Warm	9d.
			Cold	6d.
		Salt water	Warm	6d.
			Cold	4d.
Fresh water	Warm	4d.		
	Cold	3d.		
Swimming bath	Monday, Tuesday		6d.	
	Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday		2d.	

*All second-class tickets half price after midday on Saturday.*¹³¹

Later that year the private baths were opened on Saturday and Sunday as well. As the Baths were run by the Subscribers and not by the Corporation levying a rate, they could charge what they liked. Had they been run by the Corporation under the 1846 Act, the charges would have had to be a lot lower – 1d not 3d for a second-class cold bath, 2d not 4d for a second-class hot bath, 3d not 6d for a first-class cold bath and 6d not 9d for a first-class warm bath.¹³²

The swimming pool was used not just for private swimming but for races, water polo and exhibitions of swimming, and even on one occasion for the baptism of Plymouth Brethren.¹³³ The drains, which originally came out in front of the Common Staithe Quay, were moved in the mid-1870s to come out on the small south-facing portion of quay by the Crown and Mitre.¹³⁴

The Baths continued to be managed by a committee consisting of three members appointed by Lord Stanley, three by the Corporation and seven by the subscribers.¹³⁵ They do not ever seem to have been a commercial success, and as early as 1862 they were reported to be losing money; it may simply be that Lynn was not big enough to support public baths, and even the usually-optimistic Cape was unable to show a profitable establishment in the small provincial town category.¹³⁶ The reconstruction of their history is not helped by the archives of the Baths Subscribers not having survived, and it is unclear when the Corporation took the Baths over from the Subscribers.¹³⁷ They were originally run by a superintendent, but the incumbent, a Mr Billing, resigned owing to poor health in 1864, as a result of which the Subscribers decided to let them instead of running them directly.¹³⁸ It is unclear what transpired, but in 1871 and 1881 Edward Hains was ‘Superintendant of Baths’ and one John Stockings was ‘manager’ in 1883.¹³⁹

The Baths continued to operate into the 20th century, but remained financially unsuccessful.¹⁴⁰ Thomas Langley, a Lynn man, was the ‘proprietor’ in 1891 and 1901, although he tried to give notice in 1896.¹⁴¹ In 1901 the pool was emptied only once a week and there were complaints it was dirty; Langley was instructed to empty it at least three times a week, and given notice for the following spring.¹⁴² He was replaced by a Mr and Mrs W Drayton as attendants at a wage of a guinea a week plus free accommodation; the husband was already in Council employment as assistant meter (the meter’s office being just across the Common Staithe).¹⁴³ On Langley’s departure it was found that the towels all belonged to him and had to be replaced.¹⁴⁴ A new scale of charges was set out, as follows:

Private baths (Monday, Wednesday and Saturday)		
Warm water single bath	First Class	6d
(a parent and child could share)	Second Class	2d

Swimming bath

Weekdays

6.00 – 8.30 males 2d

9.00 – 11.00 females 3d

11.30 – 3.00 males 3d

3.00 – 9.00 males 2d

Saturdays

3.00 – 9.00 males 1d

*Children half-price on weekdays.*¹⁴⁵

Later that year the private baths were opened on Saturday and Sunday as well. These fees were a lot lower than those set from forty-five years before but, according to Agnes Campbell's figures, in line with what was being charged elsewhere.¹⁴⁶ It is noteworthy that only hot water was now available.

The Baths may have been seen as out of date and they were not centrally placed. In 1902 plans were drawn up by the Borough Surveyor to extend them and provide an additional pool 82ft 6in by 28ft 6in in size, with further proposals in 1911, but they came to nothing.¹⁴⁷ In 1911 a Mr and Mrs E. Franklin resigned as attendants, and replacements were advertised for, to be a married couple with free accommodation all year and, from April to October, a wage of 21s. a week plus 2s. a week for washing towels.¹⁴⁸ This winter closure suggests that the private baths were no longer working, just the swimming pool. There seems to have been a change of plan (or no applicants) as in April 1911 the baths and house were to be let by tender for a year; the tender of Edward Setchell in the sum of £14 was accepted.¹⁴⁹ He chose not to renew, and Langley reappears.¹⁵⁰ Just before the Great War the Corporation considered upgrading the baths by extending the pool to 75 feet, putting in what was described as 'proper roofing', adding new changing cubicles, and using water from the mains not the river; this would cost about £1,000.¹⁵¹ There was then a proposal to build a new pool on a new site, in the Recreation Ground.¹⁵²

There seems to have been a degree of chopping and changing between salt and fresh water, Originally, as we have seen, the swimming pool and two slipper baths were salt, but at some stage this must have been altered to fresh as in 1903 it was announced that salt water was to be introduced as an additional attraction; however in 1916 an order was given to stop the use of river water as it was insanitary, the water being changed only twice a week and there being no facilities for anyone to wash before entering the pool.¹⁵³

During the Great War the military authorities asked for hot and cold water to be made available to troops, but the Corporation refused; however, troops were allowed to drill on the Common Staithe Quay.¹⁵⁴ Langley's daughter's wedding

reception was held in the emptied swimming pool in 1920.¹⁵⁵ This suggests that, unlike some baths elsewhere, there was no facility to board the pool over in the winter.¹⁵⁶

On 1st April 1921 the Baths were reported as having reopened with new attendants, Mr and Mrs E. Meggitt.¹⁵⁷ At the same time the supply of mains water ceased, so presumably only salt was used.¹⁵⁸ In 1922 Langley came on the scene yet again and reported to the Corporation that alterations had been made to the 'boiler and tank' as a result of which he could supply hot baths. His request to admit schoolchildren to the swimming pool was rejected; no reason is given, although two years earlier it had been declared unsuitable for teaching children by an Inspector of Physical Training - the problem seems to have been that it was too deep, but if part was made shallower, it would be no good for galas.¹⁵⁹ An anonymous tenant of the Baths is mentioned in 1926 (wanting new wallpaper) but it is unclear whether they were still operating or if the lease was just of the domestic accommodation.¹⁶⁰ The next year a Mrs A. Proctor sought – successfully – to be released from the tenancy.¹⁶¹ A month later the Property Rights and Burial Board Committee of the Corporation inspected the premises (described as 'formerly used as public baths') and resolved to ask the Conservancy Board if they would be any use to it.¹⁶² Negotiations on terms proved unsuccessful, however.¹⁶³

After final closure and replacement by a new outdoor pool on the Recreation Ground, further east in the town, the Baths went through a number of uses. The northern pavilion was used for a time as a pickle factory.¹⁶⁴ The front part was incorporated in the Pilot Office in 1961.¹⁶⁵ Some internal work was undertaken after floods in 1979, and the Harbourmaster's Office (the north pavilion) was panelled in the early 2000s.¹⁶⁶ The back (the pool and tank) was for a time the warehouse of Messrs Brown Bros and Taylor, house furnishers, and part (possibly the Chimney Yard) was used as a lock-up garage.¹⁶⁷ More recently the back was a gym and boxing club;¹⁶⁸ it is now empty. The freehold was transferred to the Conservancy Board, together with that of the rest of the site, in 1997.

2.7 FLUVIAL CHANGE

As has been mentioned, much of Lynn, and the whole of the HAZ site, is reclaimed ground. It seems, however, that the position of the riverbank in the vicinity of the Common Staithe remained reasonably unchanged over the 17th and 18th centuries. A crane was bequeathed to the Trinity Guild in 1528, although there are likely to have been cranes since the mid-13th century.¹⁶⁹ It was rebuilt in 1568; it or a successor appears in late 17th-century views. A crane is recorded in 1830, when it was used to land a whale, and in 1846.¹⁷⁰

There was sufficient depth of water for large ships to dock well into the 19th century. In 1846 it was stated that ‘steamers and small coasters’ frequently landed cargoes at the Common Staithe Quay, and in particular the steam packet the *Lord Nelson* plied between Lynn and Hull from 1831 until about 1852.¹⁷¹ In the latter year it was reported that the river in front of the Common Staithe Quay had so silted up that the packet had difficulty getting alongside.¹⁷² This may not have been the first time, as in 1838 the Borough Treasurer had proposed a new piled wharf ‘at the west end of the wharf in front of the Common Staithe Quay’, although it was not proceeded with.¹⁷³ The question became less urgent with the construction of docks to the north in the late 1840s.¹⁷⁴ In 1852 there were proposals for the extension of the East Anglian Railway Company’s line northwards along the riverbank as far as the Common Staithe, but they came to nothing after opposition from riparian property owners.¹⁷⁵ A plan to build a fishermen’s dock in front of part (it seems the north) of the Common Staithe in 1873 did not proceed.¹⁷⁶

In 1853 the river landscape changed with the blocking up of the old course of the river and its replacement by the new Norfolk Estuary Cut further west.¹⁷⁷ Almost immediately it became clear that the Common Staithe was silting up, and a proposal to pave Common Staithe Lane was withdrawn as there was insufficient traffic on it.¹⁷⁸ By 1860 the quay was described as useless, with the rent achievable insufficient for the Corporation to keep it clear, although there may have been a level of hyperbole in this: only a few months later it was reported that a good quantity of sand and coals were being landed there.¹⁷⁹ Repairs continued to be made to the quay wall over the years.¹⁸⁰ There were few alternatives, however; in the 1850s the new South Quay and the Common Staithe Quay were still the only areas of riverfront with vertical wharfing, and everywhere else was just mud with mooring poles.¹⁸¹

At the north end was what was described as a reservoir which could be emptied to flush out some of the sand and silt, although sewers also emptied into it, prompting many complaints in the 1860s.¹⁸² In 1884 there was a direction to repair the flushing mechanism, which had fallen into disuse, but it was then countermanded to avoid damaging the foundations of the Quay; this resulted in a channel having to be dug out the next year to enable a buoy to be floated.¹⁸³ However in 1891 the

reservoir was again reported as being out of order as the sluice door was not watertight.¹⁸⁴ Its sluices are shown on contemporary maps, being roughly in line with the southern end of the Market Hall and Corn Exchange (Fig. 44).¹⁸⁵ No record has come to light of its having been filled in, either during the late 20th-century land reclamation or earlier, and so it is possible it is still there in some form, its entrance buried by subsequent reclamation.

Once the silting-up became permanent, alternative uses for the foreshore emerged, and it was used for 'floatage' by nearby timber merchants.¹⁸⁶ Some foreshore land to the north of the quay was enclosed and became part of the grounds of the King's Lynn Laundry (Fig. 45); it is now part of the site of Trinity Quay. The Common Staithe Quay retained or developed status as the public riverbank; townspeople are recorded promenading on it or watching a regatta.¹⁸⁷ Swimming off it was frowned upon, both because it might be dangerous and as an 'outrage against public decency'.¹⁸⁸ Extensive repairs were carried out in 1874-75, when the southernmost 20 feet were taken down and rebuilt (the coping stones at the angle, which must have projected above quay level, being put back lower), and in 1892 when 103 feet was pulled down and rebuilt.¹⁸⁹

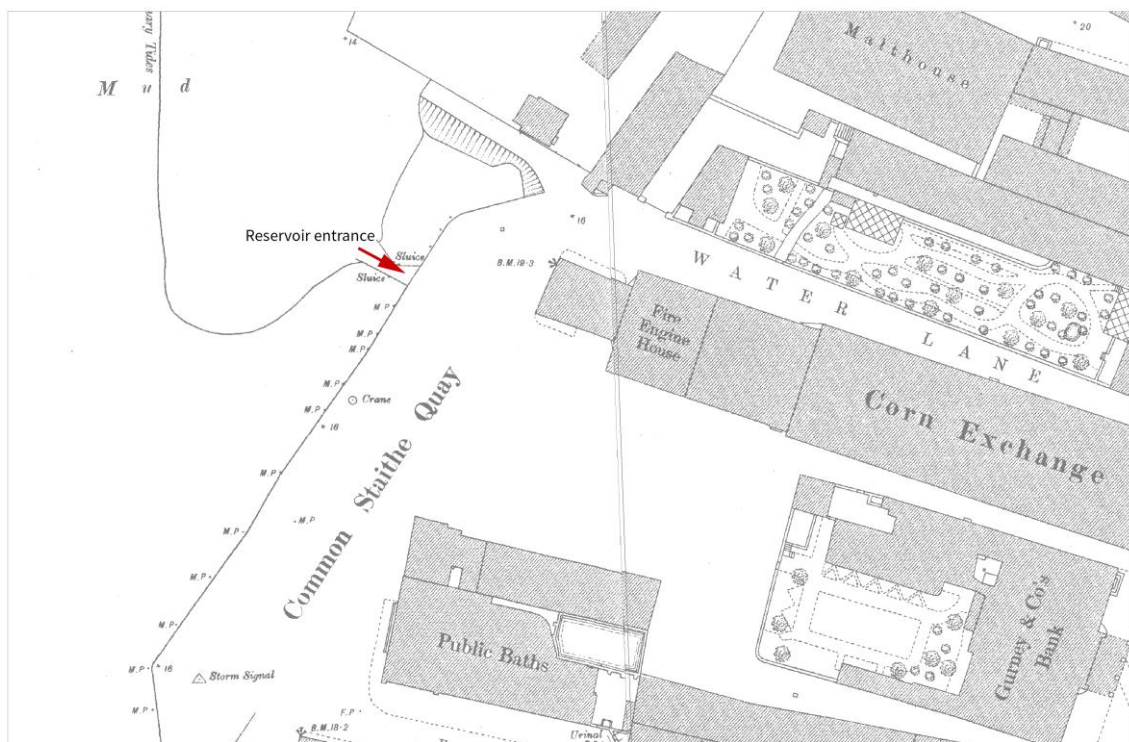


Fig. 44. The entrance to the reservoir under the Common Staithe, marked on the 1883 Ordnance Survey. 125" to 1 mile OS map, surveyed 1883, taken from the Historic England corporate GIS, NTS (Historic Ordnance Survey mapping © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2018). Licence number 000394 and TP 0024



Fig. 45 An aerial view of the Common Staithe in 1930, showing the area (marked with the arrow) taken in from the foreshore as part of the Lynn Laundry. Detail of HEA (Aerofilms Collection) EPW031686 1952

2.8 THE NEW PILOT OFFICE



Fig. 46 The Pilot Office from the south-west, a watercolour by the Lynn artist Walter Dexter, 1906. Norfolk Museums Service (Lynn Museum) KILLM 1991 b334

One result of the changing position of the river channel was the building of a new pilot office in 1863 (Fig. 46), something first proposed in 1857.¹⁹⁰ This restored its site to the Common Staithe. This was not the only position in the town with a view downstream, but it had the financial and practical advantage of being in the

Corporation's ownership.¹⁹¹ The particular site chosen was to the west of the 1829 warehouse (the Buoy Store).¹⁹² The Corporation Property Committee directed that building was to be in line with the frontage of the baths (thus facing west rather than – the other possibility on the site – north) and to be in similar style and materials.¹⁹³

The Corporation did not, however, return to Thomas Oliver, the architect of the Baths. Instead they chose the principal local architect, William Newham junior.¹⁹⁴ The son of an architect of the same name, who was the Corporation's chamberlain from 1804 to 1816 until dismissed for overcharging, and the grandson of the architect and builder Samuel Newham, surveyor to the Paving Commissioners, William was born in Lynn in or about 1806 and early on is described as a builder.¹⁹⁵ In 1852 he married Ann Rutland, a Norfolk farmer's daughter.¹⁹⁶ He lived latterly in Austin Street and died in 1878.¹⁹⁷

Newham estimated that the building would cost £300 but then unilaterally revised the specifications to increase the thickness of the walls of the tower chamber and make the tower foundations entirely concrete (foundations being a concern on reclaimed land), with the result that the tenders came in nearly two-thirds over estimate.¹⁹⁸ The Corporation had not been unanimous in proceeding with the project owing to doubts about the state of their finances, and so he was told to redo the tender process on the basis of the original plans; the result was that the tender was awarded to a builder, Charles Bennett, who had submitted the lowest tender, of £360.¹⁹⁹ Building had started by June 1864, although without the clock which the Corporation is reported to have refused to pay for (perhaps as a way of getting the tender nearer to the estimate); presumably it would have replaced one of the round windows.²⁰⁰

The building seems to have continued in its intended use down to the present day, subject to changes in the way the harbour operates; it expanded into the front part of the Baths building in 1961, and at some stage filled in its small yard to make a lavatory and kitchen.²⁰¹

The harbour authorities (statutorily renamed the King's Lynn Conservancy Board in 1897) seem to have used some of the warehouses from the time they moved into their offices; there is reference to a buoy warehouse in 1868.²⁰² However, some larger buoys had at one stage been stored in a warehouse at St Anne's Fort built by the beaconer in 1828, and other buoys were kept in premises on the Boal Quay, further south, until they were evicted just after the Great War.²⁰³

2.9 THE 20TH CENTURY



Fig. 47 The Carpenters' Workshop from the east. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 2-MAY-2017 ©Historic England.

Two buildings were erected within the HAZ site in the 20th century. After the Conservancy Board had to leave the Boal Quay premises, as just mentioned, they were given the use of all the 1829-34 warehouses. These were insufficient, and shortly afterwards, in about 1920, what is now known as the Carpenters' Workshop was built to the east, described originally as 'the new Buoy House' (Fig. 47).²⁰⁴ It abuts the 1829/1834 range on its east but is aligned north-south not east-west, and has no communication with that range except a hatch; the site is shown as open on the 1883 Ordnance Survey map and, like the site of the 1829/1834 range, was part of the historically-open space in the middle of the Common Staithe Yard. Its site may represent the 'piece of land' for use by the Conservancy Board and adjoining their premises, staked out on the Common Staithe in 1899.²⁰⁵

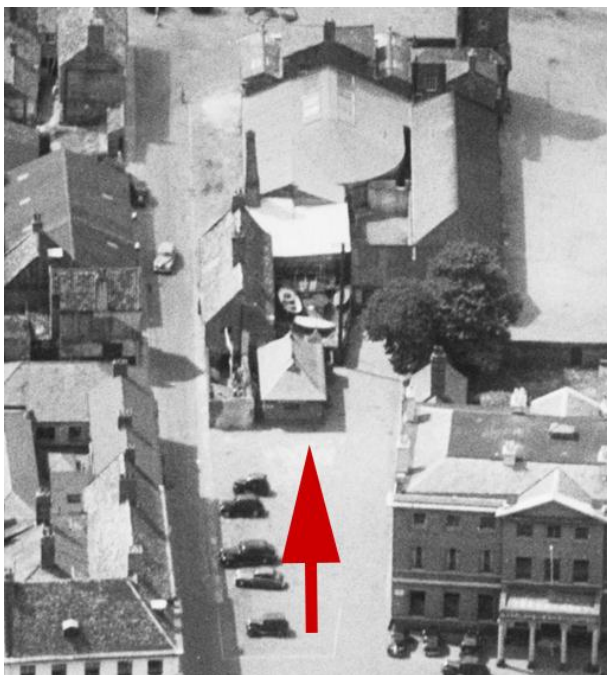


Fig. 48. An aerial photograph of the Common Staithe in 1952; the arrow points to the 1928 public lavatories. Detail of HEA (Aerofilms Collection) EAW044459 27-JUN-1952

The second building of 20th-century date was a public lavatory. The Corporation had thought of selling the by-then vacant site of Smetham's House just after the Great War, but had finally voted against it in 1923.²⁰⁶ In 1928 plans were drawn up for public lavatories just south-east of the Carpenters' Workshop (perhaps significantly, leaving space for other future uses of the majority of the Smetham's House site), and they seem to have been built shortly afterwards (Fig. 48).²⁰⁷ A proposal by the Conservancy Board in 1964 to erect their own lavatories 'at the rear of the Buoy Shop' (presumably the Carpenters' Shop) does not seem to have proceeded, and in the end lavatories were built within the Buoy Store by local mariners themselves.²⁰⁸ New public lavatories were built further east in 1966, designed by Desmond Waite, in a flat-roofed Modernist style incorporating flint panels (Fig. 49), upon completion of which the old ones were pulled down; sadly the 1966 building no longer survives.²⁰⁹ They were let into the ground to reduce their external height.²¹⁰



Fig. 49 The public lavatories of 1966, designed by Desmond Waite; their predecessors are visible in the background. Norfolk Library and Information Service (King's Lynn Library Archives)

Change took place on the eastern part of the historic Common Staithe (but outside the HAZ boundary) with extensive work to Gurney's. It was refronted, removing a porte-cochère, in the second half of the twentieth century (see Fig. 25). The date is usually given is 1951, but a photograph of 1952 shows the old façade, and a series of record photographs in King's Lynn Library is dated 1955. The refronting had taken place by the time of another photograph in 1963. More significantly, within this same decade, and presumably at the same time, the extensive range of outbuildings was demolished and replaced by largely flat-roofed single storey structures which now cover most of the site. The old outbuildings may possibly have incorporated parts of the old Common Staithe buildings, although this is uncertain. Their most distinctive feature was a triple gable (Fig. 50). It was presumably these outbuildings which were served by the tall, narrow chimneystacks which clasp each side of the rear pediment, to rather bizarre effect.

Immediately to the south of Gurney's, and so on part of the site of Smetham's House and of Bank Lane, a photograph of 1955 shows a single-storey wooden building with a shallow-pitched roof (Fig. 51). It is not there in views of 1952 or 1963 and so was presumably temporary; it may have been extra accommodation for Barclays Bank, which then occupied Gurney's, before or during the partial rebuilding works.



Fig. 50 The former Gurney's house (later Barclay's Bank) from the west in 1955, showing the triple-gabled outbuildings. Norfolk Library and Information Service (King's Lynn Library Archives)



Fig. 51 A 1955 view of temporary building south of Gurney's. Norfolk Library and Information Service (King's Lynn Library Archives)

The Common Staithe largely slumbered over the 20th century, little-used and primarily the preserve of the Conservancy Board and the Fire Brigade. The southernmost part of the quay, opposite the Baths and Pilot Office, remained clear and in use by the Conservancy Board (as it does today); it retained a crane until about 2000.²¹¹ The rest, however, silted up to produce a triangular grassy area. As early as 1870 there had been proposals to extend the quay, which would have the triple advantage of pushing the waterfront out to deeper water, reclaiming land and avoiding having to repair the existing quay wall, but they came to nothing.²¹²

Sometime between 1952 and 1963 a sea wall was built around most of the grassy area which was raised up to the top of the level of the old quay; an aerial photograph of 1963 shows it metalled and with parking spaces seemingly newly painted (Fig. 52).



Fig. 52 An aerial view of the Common Staithe in 1963 showing the foreshore outside the Common Staithe Quay metalled and with parking spaces painted on. Detail of HEA (Aerofilms Collection) EAW116074 8-JUL-1963



Fig. 53 Recreational use of the riverside in 1968. Norfolk Library and Information Service (King's Lynn Library Archives)



Fig. 54 (above left) The HAZ boundary, showing outlined in blue the portion reclaimed in the second half of the 20th century. Modern Ordnance Survey mapping: © Crown Copyright and database right 2017. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900

Fig. 55 (above right) The top of the old quay, still visible in the paving of the Common Staithe car park. Presumably the 16th or 17th century quay wall survives below it. Photograph: Sarah Newsome 27-FEB-2017 ©Historic England

The area on the river side of this was used recreationally, with park benches from which to enjoy the view (Fig. 53). (Even in the 1850s when the quay was fully operational it had been recorded as being used as a place for promenading).²¹³ In the late 1980s, presumably as a result of the threat of flooding, a sea wall and raised public walkway were built to enclose the tarmacaded area. This reclaimed land, which forms much of the HAZ site (Fig. 54), is currently used as a car park. The line of the old quay is still visible in the paving (Fig. 55).

There had been proposals for far more radical change to the Common Staithe in the 1960s, when the Corporation planned the redevelopment of it and the Corn Exchange as a 'recreational centre', but nothing materialised.²¹⁴ The surroundings of the Common Staithe, in contrast, saw much change in the century and a half from the 1860s. The Fisher Fleet, just to the north, had long marked the northern edge of the town proper (although the Civil War defences had extended a bit further north still). In 1869 the building of the Docks created a busy industrial quarter north of Paige Stair Lane.²¹⁵ On its south side was a Malt House (marked on the 1883 Ordnance Survey map), which survives. Between it and Water Street, behind the high-status house fronting onto the Tuesday Market Place, was a timber yard

which by 1929 had become the King's Lynn Laundry (Fig. 56). In the 1980s this was demolished and replaced by three- and four-storey flats (Fig. 57). They were named Trinity Quay (presumably a reference to the Trinity Guild which owned the Common Staithe before the Reformation) and have a tower at the south-west corner which echoes that on the Pilot Office (Fig. 58).

In 1995 most of the Corn Exchange was demolished except for the façade and easternmost few feet, and rebuilt as a theatre. This also required the pulling down of the surviving west part of the 1828 Market Hall, and other fire station buildings; the single-storey structure further west, used at some stage as the meter's office and probably a survival of the old north range of the Elizabethan Common Staithe, had been demolished in 1967.²¹⁶ The new theatre is mostly of uniform height, and so much taller. It has thus, perhaps unfortunately, become unnecessarily dominant, taking the eye away from Gurney's, the traditional focus of the site. To the south of the Common Staithe, the southern side of Ferry Street has remained relatively unchanged, dominated by two public houses of Georgian appearance, the Globe Hotel at the east and the Crown and Mitre at the west (Figs. 59 and 60).²¹⁷



Fig. 56 An aerial view in 1963. The arrow marks the Lynn Laundry, subsequently replaced by the flats of Trinity Quay. Detail of HEA (Aerofilms Collection) EAW116074 08-JUL-1963



Fig. 57 Trinity Quay under construction in 1990. Norfolk Museums Service (Lynn Museum)



Fig. 58 Trinity Quay from the tower of the Pilot Office. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 59 Looking west along Ferry Street, the southern boundary of the site. On the left is the Globe Hotel. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 2-MAY-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 60. Looking west at the west end of Ferry Street. In the centre is the Crown and Mitre, and beyond it West Lynn, across the river. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 27-FEB-2017 ©Historic England

Endnotes

¹ Not to be confused with Ferry Lane further south; the northern side of it, between the public lavatories and former Gurney's house, was named Common Staithe Lane in 1842 (King's Lynn Borough Archives, KL/PC2/5 Paving Commissioners 10th October 1842) but was also sometimes called Bank Lane (as on the accession sheets to photographs of the medieval arches referred to below), and to add to the confusion, in the 18th century Common Staithe Lane was the present southern arm of Ferry Street, south of the public lavatories. In 1809 the Paving Commissioners made an order renaming Common Staithe Lane Ferry Street (D Higgins 2008 *The Remaking of King's Lynn: Brown Brick and Rounded Corners*. King's Lynn: Phoenix Publications, 15, 119).

² W Rye 1887 'The Vocabulary of East Anglia', *Norfolk Antiquarian Miscellany* 3 465-602, 580; P Sykes 2003 *Notes on Houses in the Riverside Streets of King's Lynn and Their Known Owners and Tenants up to 1849* Vol. 2 (typescript, NRO 8129), 45; V Parker 1971 *The making of King's Lynn: secular buildings from the 11th to 17th centuries*. London: Phillimore, 122, 136; *Norwich Mercury* 22nd October 1870

³ The list is in Owen c 1984 199. They are plotted on the map by H Clarke 1981 'The medieval waterfront of King's Lynn' in Gustav Milne and Brian Hobley (eds), *CBA Research Report no. 41: Waterfront Archaeology in Britain and Northern Europe* 132-35 (Fig. 123, p. 134). The *pontes* are referred to in A G Dyson 1981 'The terms 'quay' and 'wharf' and the early medieval London waterfront' in Gustav Milne and Brian Hobley (eds), *CBA Research Report no. 41: Waterfront Archaeology in Britain and Northern Europe* 37-38, 38.

⁴ Dyson 37; J A Schofield 1981 'Medieval waterfront buildings in the City of London', Gustav Milne and Brian Hobley (eds), *CBA Research Report no. 41: Waterfront Archaeology in Britain and Northern Europe* 24-31, 31. Vanessa Parker argues that in the 16th and 17th centuries the other principal quay, the King's Staithe, was restricted largely to coal and timber and, unlike the Common Staithe, had neither a crane nor undercover storage. (V Parker 122) although a crane was set up on the Purfleet Quay in 1623 (*ibid*).

⁵ Dyson 37

⁶ V Parker 112

⁷ Schofield 30. The Steelyard at Lynn was a rather more modest affair with just one warehouse.

⁸ E Carus-Wilson 1963 'The Medieval Trade of the Ports of the Wash' *Medieval Archaeology* 6-7 182-201 *passim* and especially Fig. 68

⁹ Carus-Wilson 198, 200

¹⁰ Carus-Wilson 199

- ¹¹ D Ellmers 2005 'Late Medieval Harbours: Function and Construction' , Klaus Friedland and Paul Richards (eds), *Essays in Hanseatic History: The King's Lynn Symposium 1998*. Dereham: Larks Press, 42
- ¹² Ellmers 42
- ¹³ Dyson 37
- ¹⁴ Dyson 37
- ¹⁵ Ellmers 46
- ¹⁶ Ellmers 47
- ¹⁷ E and P Rutledge 1978 'King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth, Two Thirteenth-century Surveys' *Norfolk Archaeology* 37-1 92-114, 97 (*forum diei martis*). The same thing happened at Bremen in the 13th century (Ellmers 47)
- ¹⁸ 'Cum toto solo et sabuli quod eidem placeae accrescitur, seu per chayas' and 'cum increment soli et sabuli adjacentis usque aquam praedictam'
- ¹⁹ 'evandum accrescere poterit' Clarke 1981 132, based on a transcription in Turner 196-97 (referenced by Clarke in error as 'Dashwood'). It is unclear why Clarke dates it 'after 1243' when Turner dates it to c. 1270.
- ²⁰ S Bates 1998 'The Waterfront at King's Lynn - Recent Excavations' *Norfolk Archaeology* 43:1 31-61 at 32; Clarke, H 1973 'The changing riverline of King's Lynn, Norfolk, in the Middle Ages', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* (1973) 2-1, 95-106, Fig. 4 p. 99.
- ²¹ Rutledge and Rutledge 93-94 and especially Fig. 1
- ²² Clarke 1981 Fig. 120 p. 132 and King's Lynn and West Norfolk Community Services 1995. *Corn Exchange, Tuesday Market Place, King's Lynn: Record of Demolition of Buildings to rear of main hall...*
- ²³ British Geological Survey TF62SW217, TF62SW176 and TF62SW175, dated respectively 16 June 1994, 5 November 1987 and 2-4 November 1987.
- ²⁴ Dyson 37
- ²⁵ For which see Bates 41-59
- ²⁶ Pevsner, N, and B Wilson 1992 *The Buildings of England: Norfolk 2: North-west and South*. London: Penguin, 497. The house is listed Grade II*, list entry number 1289527, under the name Bishop's Lynn House.
- ²⁷ Clarke 1981 135.
- ²⁸ Such as London (Schofield 28); W A Pantin 1963 'The Merchants' Houses and Warehouses of King's Lynn', *Medieval Archaeology* 6-7 173-81, 174
- ²⁹ V Parker 122
- ³⁰ D Higgins 2005 *The ingenious Mr Henry Bell* (King's Lynn: Phoenix Publications) 30.
- ³¹ Higgins' dating (Higgins *Bell*, 43-45)
- ³² Described by Pantin 175-79
- ³³ Schofield 29
- ³⁴ Owen 192
- ³⁵ Schofield 29
- ³⁶ V Parker 122-23 (KLM Db27; KLM/HBV/366d), 165; Higgins *Bell*
- ³⁷ V Parker 122
- ³⁸ V Parker 98
- ³⁹ Bates 49
- ⁴⁰ V Parker 122-23
- ⁴¹ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/C52:1-9 lease 9th December 1811 to John Smetham; 1881 Census.
- ⁴² Higgins, *Bell*, 38, 42; *Norwich Mercury* 22nd July 1863
- ⁴³ V Parker 102, 123.
- ⁴⁴ King's Lynn and West Norfolk Community Services 1995. *Corn Exchange, Tuesday Market Place, King's Lynn: Record of Demolition of Buildings to rear of main hall...*
- ⁴⁵ The position was similar elsewhere, for example at Poole (I P Horsey 1988 'Poole: the medieval waterfront and its usage', G L Good, R H Jones and M W Ponsford (eds), *CBA Research Report no. 74: Waterfront Archaeology* (Proceedings of the third international conference, Bristol)) 51); Bates 58; Clarke 1971 105
- ⁴⁶ Clarke 1981 134 (citing the Red Register f9v)
- ⁴⁷ G Milne 1981 'Medieval riverfront reclamation in London', Gustav Milne and Brian Hobley (eds), *CBA Research Report no. 41: Waterfront Archaeology in Britain and Northern Europe* 32-36, 33

- ⁴⁸ Ellmers 48
- ⁴⁹ Bates p. 58
- ⁵⁰ Private quays seem to have required a licence from the Corporation, at least by the Georgian period. See King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/C52:1-9 licence 11th April 1805 to Alexander Bowker
- ⁵¹ W J Wren 1976 *Ports of the Eastern Counties: The development of harbours on the Coast of the Eastern Counties from Boston in Lincolnshire to Rochford in Essex*. Lavenham; Terence Dalton, 43
- ⁵² King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/C54 Af 240
- ⁵³ *Norwich Mercury* 22nd October 1870
- ⁵⁴ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/C51/44; www.kinglynn-forums, sub Bomb Shelter, post by EWW 20 June 2008, accessed 5 January 2018.
- ⁵⁵ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC1/23 (Property Rights and Burial Board Committee 29th October 1925); KL/TC1/20 (Property Rights and Burial Board Committee 26th November and 31st December 1925)
- ⁵⁶ Sykes 95 (not 1693, *pace* Higgins, *Bell*, p. 49)
- ⁵⁷ Illustrated in Higgins, *Bell*, 49.
- ⁵⁸ Sykes 95
- ⁵⁹ NRO BL 5/14.
- ⁶⁰ This measurement fits with that of the present-day building on the site.
- ⁶¹ Or is it a triangular pediment altered to a segmental one?
- ⁶² King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/C50/464 Release, Corporation to John Turner 1711
- ⁶³ Sykes 95; Higgins, *Bell*, 49; it was still occupied by the family in 1911, although by then including a branch of Barclay's Bank (Census). Now listed Grade II, list entry number 1195815, under the name Barclays Bank.
- ⁶⁴ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/C52:1-9 lease 4th June 1800; KL/TC2/1/1 Committee reports 14th June 1799; KL/C8/32 Hall Book 31st December 1830
- ⁶⁵ Pantin 173; King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/1 Committee reports 1793-1820, 1st July 1805.
- ⁶⁶ NRO BL 4/5
- ⁶⁷ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/C48/11
- ⁶⁸ V Parker 123
- ⁶⁹ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/C48/5
- ⁷⁰ This seems to have been in the south range, as it is described as on Ferry Street in 1829 (King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/C8/32 Hall Book 1st October 1829); KL/C39/208
- ⁷¹ 10 Geo IV cap V; Listed Grade II, list entry number 1212488 (the current description refers to the building which has since largely been demolished)
- ⁷² *Kelly's Directory* 1883
- ⁷³ A Parker and B Howling 2004 *King's Lynn: A history and celebration of the town*. Salisbury: Francis Frith Book Co, 66
- ⁷⁴ A paper entitled 'River Approaches' read at a meeting of the Paving Commissioners on 1st July 1863.
- ⁷⁵ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/3/1 (Tuesday Market Committee 19th November 1830). There is a confusing reference in August 1830 to a report into the gable of the old warehouses adjoining the Fish Market (KL/C8/32 hall Book 29th August 1830).
- ⁷⁶ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC1/65 (Estates Committee 21st March 1967)
- ⁷⁷ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/2 Committee Reports 1820-38 GPC 11 March 1825
- ⁷⁸ John Wood's map 1830; Burnet, W P 1846 *A Plan of King's Lynn*. Lynn: E Longbottom ; KL/C39/150 (Guild Hall Book 19th June 1828)
- ⁷⁹ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/3/1 (Tuesday Market Committee 23rd August 1830)
- ⁸⁰ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/C39/150 (Guild Hall Book 19th June 1828)
- ⁸¹ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC1/23 (Property Rights and Burial Board Committee 28th May 1925)
- ⁸² King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/8 (Property Committee 15th June 1868)
- ⁸³ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/4 Common Staithe Quay and Tolls Committee 1st May 1856; NM 7th May 1856
- ⁸⁴ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/PC2/9 Paving Commissioners 18th January 1872
- ⁸⁵ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/C39/692 (Guild Hall Book 9th August 1843)
- ⁸⁶ *Norfolk Chronicle* 10th February 1855; *The Builder* 3rd March 1855
- ⁸⁷ *Norwich Mercury* M 23rd June 1855; NC 7th July 1855

- ⁸⁸ *Report of the Lynn Public Baths Committee* July 1856 (Lynn Museum KILLM:1997.716)
- ⁸⁹ This is borne out by the instructions when the 1829 warehouse was built to leave sufficient carriageway to its south (King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/C39/150 , Guild Hall Book 19th June 1828)
- ⁹⁰ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/PC2/7 (Paving Commissioners 6th August 1856); KL/PC2/7 (Paving Commissioners 3rd September and 1st October 1856)
- ⁹¹ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/4 Minutes 1851-1857 (Common Staithe Quay and Tolls Committee, 1st May 1856); *Norwich Mercury* 7th May 1856; *Norwich Mercury* 5th July 1856
- ⁹² *Norfolk News* 12th May 1860.
- ⁹³ *Wisbech Chronicle* 16th August 1862
- ⁹⁴ *Norfolk Chronicle* 27th May 1865; King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/5 (Boal Quay Committee 8th November 1859) KL/TC2/1/10 (Property Committee 30th October 1876)
- ⁹⁵ *Norwich Mercury* 1st August 1863
- ⁹⁶ W P Burnet 1846 *A Hand Book of King's Lynn or a Visit to the Metropolis of Marshland*. London: Whitaker & Co, 15; W Ames 1852 *The Port of King's Lynn: Its Position and Prospects*. King's Lynn: Thew & Sons 9
- ⁹⁷ *Wisbech Chronicle* 16th August 1862.
- ⁹⁸ Parker and Howling 55.
- ⁹⁹ Census *sub* Ferry St.
- ¹⁰⁰ The Corporation kept changing its mind whether to demolish or repair – v. King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC1/60 (Streets and Watch Committee 8th June 1961, 6th July 1961; Housing Committee 12th June 1961, 9th October 1961, 6th November 1961, 8th January 1962; Hall 28th June 1961, 26th July 1961, 25th October 1961, 24th January 1962, 2nd May 1962)
- ¹⁰¹ M Binney 1988 'Architecture' in *Taking the Plunge: The architecture of bathing*. London: SAVE Britain's Heritage, 1; H and A Laing 1988 'History' in *Taking the Plunge: The architecture of bathing*. London: SAVE Britain's Heritage 11.
- ¹⁰² Campbell 28
- ¹⁰³ A Campbell 1918 *Report on Public Baths and Wash-houses in the United Kingdom*. Edinburgh: Carnegie United Kingdom Trust 3.
- ¹⁰⁴ W Lee 1853 *Report to the General Board of Health on a Preliminary Enquiry into the Sewerage, Drainage and Supply of Water and the sanitary condition of the inhabitants of the Borough of King's Lynn*
- ¹⁰⁵ Laing p. 14; M Berclouw 2013 'A Prosaic but Useful Service: Bathhouses and Washhouses, an Idea Whose Time Had Come' (online at www.victorianweb.org/science/health/berclouw.html accessed 2nd March 2017) (section, 'Petitions to the House of Lords...' second paragraph)
- ¹⁰⁶ See Diagram 1 in Campbell; A Ashpitel and J Whichcord 1851 *Observations on Baths and Wash-houses with an Account of their History...* London: John Weale, . 12-13; G A Cape 1854 *Baths and Wash Houses; the History of their Rise and Progress...* London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co 35-38.
- ¹⁰⁷ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/3 General Purposes Committee 17th December 1849
- ¹⁰⁸ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/4 5th Nov 1853
- ¹⁰⁹ Bill dated 13th January 1854 (Lynn Museum KILLM:1997.596)
- ¹¹⁰ Cape 49.
- ¹¹¹ Cape 50.
- ¹¹² *The Builder* 5th July 1856
- ¹¹³ *The Builder* 3rd March 1855; NM 12th May 1855
- ¹¹⁴ Report of the Lynn Public Baths Committee July 1856 (Lynn Museum KULLM:1997.716)
- ¹¹⁵ *Norwich Mercury* 23rd June 1855; NC 7th July 1855; *The Builder* 31st March 1855; NM 11th July 1851
- ¹¹⁶ Lynn Museum KILLM 1997.717 and KILLM 1997.730; Binney 2,4; Laing 14
- ¹¹⁷ Felstead, *sub* Thomas Oliver (1791-1857)
- ¹¹⁸ H Colvin 1995 *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600 – 1840* (3rd ed) (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) 715
- ¹¹⁹ Lynn Museum KILLM:1997.716
- ¹²⁰ *Norwich Mercury* 21st March 1855; *The Builder* 31st March 1855
- ¹²¹ *Norwich Mercury* 21st March 1855; *The Builder* 24th March 1855
- ¹²² *Norfolk Chronicle* 5th May 1855; *The Builder* 12th May 1855
- ¹²³ *The Builder* 4th August 1855 and 15th September 1855; *Norwich Mercury* 10th October 1855; *The Builder* 26th July 1856
- ¹²⁴ Report of the Lynn Public Baths Committee July 1856 (Lynn Museum KILLM:1997.716)

- ¹²⁵ Three gentlemen's baths, three men's first class, fourteen men's second class, three ladies' and six women's, making twenty-nine in all, (Ashpitol Plate 2 ground-floor plan).
- ¹²⁶ Five men's first class baths, twelve men's second class, two ladies' first class, four ladies' second class (so twenty-three in all) (Cape, plan on [un-numbered] plate)
- ¹²⁷ Report of the Lynn Public Baths Committee July 1856 (Lynn Museum KULLM:1997.716) and *The Builder* 26th July 1856 (which latter however says only two shower baths); *The Builder* 24th March 1855.
- ¹²⁸ *The Builder* 26th July 1856
- ¹²⁹ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/13 (Health and Port Sanitary Committee 28th May 1915)
- ¹³⁰ Laing and Laing 14.
- ¹³¹ Report of the Lynn Public Baths Committee July 1856 (Lynn Museum KILLM:1997.716)
- ¹³² See Laing 14, Ashpitol 8-9; Cape 38-39 (these charges are those fixed by the amending Act of 1847).
- ¹³³ *Lincolnshire Echo* 26th July 1902; *Cheltenham Chronicle* 3rd October 1903.
- ¹³⁴ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC2/1/9 (Property Committee 18th February 1874).
- ¹³⁵ Report of the Lynn Public Baths Committee July 1856 (Lynn Museum KILLM:1997.716)
- ¹³⁶ *Wisbech Chronicle* 1st March 1862; Cape 56.
- ¹³⁷ Further research in the Corporation Archives, beyond the scope of this report, might establish this. The Secretary of the Subscribers in 1864 was a Mr Share (*Stamford Mercury* 4th March 1864)
- ¹³⁸ *Stamford Mercury* 4th March 1864.
- ¹³⁹ Census; *Kelly's Directory* 1883
- ¹⁴⁰ *Northampton Mercury* 17th April 1863
- ¹⁴¹ Census; *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC2/1/15 (Property Committee 20th March 1896)
- ¹⁴² *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC2/1/17 p. 7 (Baths and Bathing Accommodation Committee 21st July 1901)
- ¹⁴³ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC2/1/17 pp.7, 9 (Baths and bating Accommodation Committee 27th January 1902 and 26th February 1902)
- ¹⁴⁴ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC2/1/17 (Baths and Bathing Accommodation Committee 11th April 1902)
- ¹⁴⁵ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC2/1/17 (Baths and Bathing Accommodation Committee 11th April 1902)
- ¹⁴⁶ Campbell 28.
- ¹⁴⁷ They do not survive (*King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC2/1/17 Baths and Bathing Accommodation Committee 27th January 1902; KL/TC1/9 Baths Committee 29th March 1911))
- ¹⁴⁸ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/9 (Baths Committee 20th February 1911)
- ¹⁴⁹ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/9 (Baths Committee 27th April 1911); KL/TC1/9 (Baths Committee 8th May 1911)
- ¹⁵⁰ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/9 (Baths Committee 7th March 1912)
- ¹⁵¹ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/11 (Hall 13th November 1912)
- ¹⁵² *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/11 (Hall 12th March 1913)
- ¹⁵³ *Northampton Mercury* 17th April 1903; *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/12 (Electricity and Waterworks Committee 23rd September 1914); KL/TC1/14 (Health and Port Sanitary Committee 28th April 1916)
- ¹⁵⁴ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/16 (Property Rights and Burial Board Committee 26th September 1918); KL/TC1/16 (Property Rights and Burial Board Committee 24th October 1918)
- ¹⁵⁵ *Lynn Advertiser* 17th December 1920 (from a post on www.kingslynn-forums.co.uk posted by StanL)
- ¹⁵⁶ Binney 9.
- ¹⁵⁷ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/19 (Health and Port Sanitary Committee 1st April 1921, 29th July 1921)
- ¹⁵⁸ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/19)Health and Port Sanitation Commitee 29th July 1921)
- ¹⁵⁹ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/20 (Health and Port Sanitary Committee 24th February 1922); KL/TC1/18 (Health and Port Sanitation Committee 30th January 1920)
- ¹⁶⁰ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/24 (Property Rights and Burial Board Committee 28th October 1926)
- ¹⁶¹ *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/23 (Finance Committee 4th August 1927)
- ¹⁶² *King's Lynn Borough Archives* KL/TC1/25 (Property Rights and Burial Board Committee 8th September 1927)

- ¹⁶³ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC1/26 (Property Rights and Burial Board Committee 1st December 1927, 1st March 1928, 26th July 1928 and 25th October 1928).
- ¹⁶⁴ Paul Bailey, Deputy Harbourmaster, pers. comm.
- ¹⁶⁵ King's Lynn Borough Archives, Minutes of King's Lynn Borough Council 1959-60 (printed and bound), Property, Burial Board and Allotments Committee 13th July 1961 and 31st January 1962
- ¹⁶⁶ Paul Bailey, Deputy Harbourmaster, pers. comm
- ¹⁶⁷ King's Lynn Borough Archives, Minutes of King's Lynn Borough Council 1959-60 (printed and bound), Property, Burial Board and Allotments Committee 15th June 1961 (when the lease was being surrendered as the company had been taken over by Great Universal Stores); KL/TC1/64 (Estates Committee 20th September 1965); KL/TC1/65 (Estates Committee 1st June 1966)
- ¹⁶⁸ Paul Bailey, Deputy Harbourmaster, pers. comm
- ¹⁶⁹ Ellmers 48
- ¹⁷⁰ V Parker 122; *Norfolk Chronicle* 27 November 1830; *Norfolk News* 17th January 1846
- ¹⁷¹ Burnet 68; *Norfolk Chronicle* 6th August 1831; *Norfolk News* 1st June 1850
- ¹⁷² *Norwich Mercury* 3rd January 1852
- ¹⁷³ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/3 Committee for General Purposes 31st January 1838; KL/C39/433 (Guild Hall Book 1st January 1838)
- ¹⁷⁴ *Norfolk News* 27th March 1847
- ¹⁷⁵ *Norfolk News* 4th December 1852.
- ¹⁷⁶ *Norwich Mercury* 12th April 1873.
- ¹⁷⁷ Wren 50
- ¹⁷⁸ *Norfolk News* 17th December 1853.
- ¹⁷⁹ *Norwich Mercury* 12th May 1860; *Norwich Mercury* 11th August 1860.
- ¹⁸⁰ For instance in 1870 (*Norfolk News* 8th January 1870) and 1875 (*Norfolk Chronicle* 20th March 1875, 3rd July 1875)
- ¹⁸¹ Wren 49.
- ¹⁸² *Norwich Mercury* 22nd July 1863; *Norwich Mercury* 1st August 1863; *Norfolk Chronicle* 1st August 1863; *Norwich Mercury* 9th May 1863; *Norfolk News* 6th June 1863; *Norwich Mercury* 22nd July 1863; King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/6 Property Committee 22nd July 1863
- ¹⁸³ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/10/1 Port and harbour Committee 24th March 1884, 9th April 1884, 13th October 1884, 15th April 1885)
- ¹⁸⁴ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/10/2 (Ports and Harbours Committee 15th June 1891)
- ¹⁸⁵ Best on the 1883 1:500 Ordnance Survey (published 1886)
- ¹⁸⁶ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/7 (Property Committee 18th March 1867); *Norfolk Chronicle* 16th March 1867; *Norfolk News* 18th May 1867
- ¹⁸⁷ *Norwich Mercury* 22nd August 1855; *Norwich Mercury* 24th July 1869
- ¹⁸⁸ *Norwich Mercury* 24th July 1869.
- ¹⁸⁹ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/9 (Property Committee 18th February 1874, 22nd March 1875); KL/TC2/10/2 (Ports and Harbours Committee 4th April 1892) – at least it was stated to be necessary; there seems to be no actual record that it was done.
- ¹⁹⁰ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/6 Property Committee minutes 22nd July 1863; *Norwich Mercury* 21st January 1857
- ¹⁹¹ *Norwich Mercury* 22nd July 1863
- ¹⁹² King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/6 Property Committee minutes 22nd July 1863
- ¹⁹³ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/6 Property Committee minutes 30th July 1863
- ¹⁹⁴ W White 1854 *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Norfolk... Sheffield* lists there architects in the town: Newham; his father who died in 1858; and the firm of Cruso and Maberley, who designed the Corn Exchange. See also Higgins, *Brown Brick* 118.
- ¹⁹⁵ Higgins, *Brown Brick*, 118, 24; he was 72 when he died according to the burial register and death certificate; 1841 Census, High Street, King's Lynn.
- ¹⁹⁶ St Nicholas', King's Lynn marriage register
- ¹⁹⁷ Censuses, King's Lynn, 1861, 1871; White's *Directory* 1854; St Nicholas', King's Lynn, burial register.
- ¹⁹⁸ *Norfolk Chronicle* 15th August 1863
- ¹⁹⁹ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/6 Property Committee minutes 24th September 1863; *Norfolk Chronicle* 10th October 1863; KL/TC2/1/6 Property Committee minutes 28th October 1863

- ²⁰⁰ *Norfolk Chronicle* 15th August 1863; *Norfolk Chronicle* 4th June 1864; King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/6 Property Committee minutes 5th September 1863
- ²⁰¹ Byelaw approval in 1964 for sanitary conveniences may relate to some of this work (KL/SE2/1/3: Register of Deposited Plans 7342). Many of the early records of the Pilot Office are said to have been burned at the beginning of the Second World War (www.kingslynn-forums, sub James Boustead, accessed 5 January 2018)
- ²⁰² M G Fell 2012 *An Illustrated History of the port of King's Lyn and its railways*. Chophill, Beds: Irwell Press, 17; *Norfolk Chronicle* 11th July 1868
- ²⁰³ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/C39/150 (Guild Hall Book)
- ²⁰⁴ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC1/18 (Property Rights and Burial Board Minutes 29th January 1920, 29th April 1920, 1st July 1920, 29th July 1920); KL/TC1/20 (Property Rights and Burial Board Committee 28th September 1922)
- ²⁰⁵ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/14/1 (Property Committee 7th July 1899)
- ²⁰⁶ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC1/21 (Hall Minutes 12th September 1923)
- ²⁰⁷ KL/TC1/26 (Health and Port Sanitary Committee 27th July 1928). They appear on a poor-quality aerial photograph taken in September 1933 (Aerofilms EPW043354).
- ²⁰⁸ King's Lynn Borough Archives King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC1/63 (Property Rights and Burial Board Committee 4th June 1964); Paul Bailey, Deputy Harbourmaster, *pers. comm.*
- ²⁰⁹ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC1/65 (Estates Committee 1st June 1966)
- ²¹⁰ Information from Richard C F Waite, architect, son of the designer.
- ²¹¹ Patrick Jary, Harbourmaster, and Paul Bailey, Deputy Harbourmaster, *pers. comm*
- ²¹² *Norwich Mercury* 14th May 1870; *Norfolk Chronicle* 15th May 1875; *Norfolk Chronicle* 3rd July 1875
- ²¹³ *Norwich Mercury* 22 Aug 1855
- ²¹⁴ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC1/65 (Estates Committee 19th October 1966)
- ²¹⁵ Wren 52
- ²¹⁶ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC1/65 (Estates Committee 21st March 1967)
- ²¹⁷ Both listed Grade II, under list numbers 1298223 and 1195308 respectively.

3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF SURVIVING ELEMENTS



Fig. 61 The buildings on the Common Staithe today; on the left are the warehouses or buoy stores, in the middle the Pilot Office, with a tower, and on the right the Baths. Detail of DP 219084 28-SEP-2017 Patricia Payne © Historic England

The various surviving elements will be discussed separately. Apart from the Arches (which are listed Grade II) and the cannon, they all form one island of buildings (Fig. 61).¹ Part or all of this island is listed Grade II, but it is unclear from the listing description exactly which parts are included.²

3.1 THE STORES (BUOY STORE, MAGAZINE AND ENGINEERS' WORKSHOP)



Fig. 62 The warehouses from the north. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 2-MAY-2017 ©Historic England

The Stores or Warehouses building consists of a single-storey building approximately 26.5m. long, aligned roughly east-west (Fig. 62; see also Fig. 35). Apart from a now-blocked hatch to the Carpenters' Workshop it has no communication with any of the other buildings to which it is attached. It is divided internally into four spaces, the first three comprising the earlier, 1829 building, and the fourth the 1834 addition. They look quite similar in appearance to the rear part of the 1828 Market Hall, demolished in 1997.³

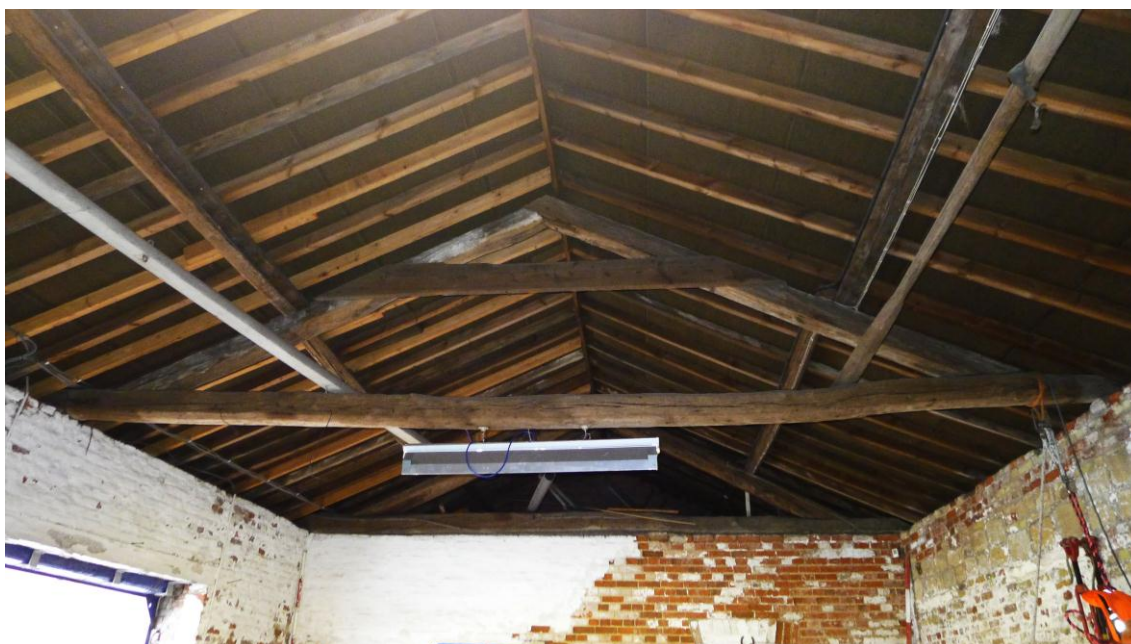


Fig. 63 The interior of the Buoy Store, looking east. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

At the western end is what is now called the Buoy Store (Fig. 63). It is entered by double doors under a very shallow segmental arch at the east end of the north façade; the threshold is formed by what seems to be half a millstone, perhaps from an edge-runner mill (Fig. 64). There is a high-level, roughly-square window in the

centre of the north wall, which at one time in the nineteenth century had a flagpole attached to it (see Fig. 85). Towards the west end of the south wall, quite high up, is a blocked-up window which would have opened onto what is now the open area to the north of the apse of the Swimming Pool Hall (Fig. 65). The north-west corner is now partitioned off as lavatories with three windows punched through what old photographs show to have been a blank wall (see Fig. 85). It has no ceiling and is open to the rafters. Its eastern wall extends only to eaves height, being open above.



Fig. 64 What appears to be a half millstone (perhaps an edge-runner) at the threshold to the Buoy Store. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 65 A blocked-up window in the south wall of the Buoy Store. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

Immediately to the east of the Buoy Store are two rooms the same width (east-west) as each other. That to the north is the Magazine, with a brick barrel-vaulted ceiling (Fig. 66). Its only opening is a foot door (with a very shallow segmental arch above)

in its north wall to the Common Staithe Yard. There is a small iron ventilation grille immediately above the voussoirs on the external wall (Fig. 67), but on the inside, there is a ventilator quite a bit higher, with presumably a pipe between them. The space above the vault is open to the Buoy Store and the Inner Store. The Magazine must have been intended for the storage of explosives for some harbour use, or for the safekeeping of explosives belonging to ships moored in the port.



Fig. 66 The interior of the Magazine, looking south. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 67 The ventilator above the door of the Magazine. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

The Inner Store is accessed by a foot door from the Buoy Store, quite possibly original, with good wavy hinges. There is a very shallow segmental arch above this opening on the west side and two almost serpentine relieving arches, one above the other, on the east face (Fig. 68); this is its only opening. The door has wavy iron hinges (Fig. 69). It has no ceiling and is open to the rafters. Its floor is slightly higher than that of the Buoy Store.



Fig. 68 (*above left*) Two relieving arches above the door from the Buoy Store into the Inner Store. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

Fig. 69 (*above right*) A hinge on the door from the Buoy Store to the Inner Store. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

The Engineers' Store (Fig. 70) is entered from the Common Staithe Yard by double doors under a very shallow segmental arch (the doorway matching that to the Buoy Store). On each side of the door, roughly midway between it and the ends of the room, are a pair of high, square windows, matching that in the Buoy Store in shape (although the west one has a wooden shutter rather than glass). There is no ceiling, the room being open to the rafters. The Engineers' Store is roughly partitioned by a steel-framed structure which appears to be of 20th-century date running north-south immediately east of the door; the resulting room (Fig. 71) has a low ceiling, leaving the space above open to the main room. In the east wall is a blocked-up hatch leading to the Carpenters' Workshop. Outside the Engineers' Store is a path, the width of the doorway, of broken, perhaps York stone (looking rather like crazy paving) (Fig. 72).



Fig. 70 The Engineers' Store from the north. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 71 The eastern section of the Engineers' Store, looking north. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 72. Paving outside the door to the Engineers' Store. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

The Warehouses are under a single, very shallowly-pitched slate-covered roof, hipped at the east end but abutting the east wall of the Pilot Office at the west. As the latter is a later building, the Buoy Store roof must have been redone twice – first when the 1834 warehouse was added to it and again in 1864 when the Pilot Office was built. The roof structure is partly of kingposts, that between the two parts being infilled with brick (Fig. 73). From inspection from the ground, it is probable that the main timbers are original but that many of the rafters have been replaced over the years (perhaps at the time of the 1925 re-roofing referred to on p. 37).

However, despite the continuous roof, the Warehouses show that they have been built in two stages; there is a clear break in the brickwork between the Engineers' Store and the rest of the structure. The type of brick is also different. The Engineers' Store is of typical early-19th century orangeish-red Norfolk Red brick, laid in English bond.⁴ The bricks of which the Buoy Store, Magazine and Inner Store are

constructed look much older, being generally longer, shallower, more irregular, and of varying colour (Fig. 74).

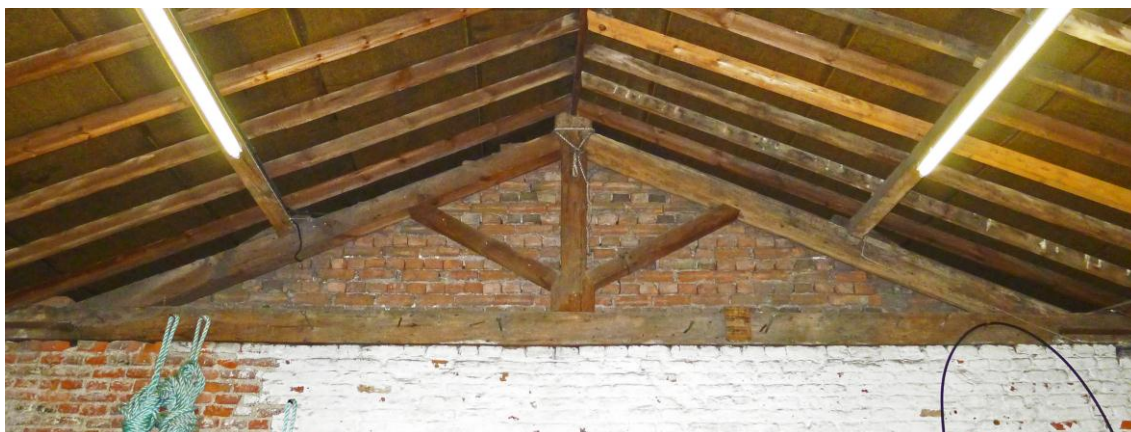


Fig. 73 The roof of the Engineers' Store, looking west. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 74 Brickwork on the north wall of the Magazine (part of the 1829 warehouse), just east of the door. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

Towards the top of the south wall of the Buoy Store, seen from inside, there is some stone (Figs. 75 and 76). It is a pale greyish-yellow and mainly roughly dressed into large blocks. It has not been examined by a geologist but is probably clunch, otherwise known as white chalk lump; some was found during the Corn Exchange excavations in 1995 as part of a wall which, if Bates' interpretation is correct, cannot be earlier than the 13th century.⁵ The mortar has some dark inclusions, perhaps not large enough to be galetting (although this was a practice known in the area).⁶ It forms an irregular band from the east end to the blocked-up window. To the west of the latter the wall is whitewashed, and it is more difficult to see what is there; there is a length of wood which might be interpreted as a lintel but as there is no sign of an opening beneath, it is perhaps just timber built into the wall to improve bonding. Some parts of the exterior of the south walls are visible from the Settling Tank (see below).

The range survives in pretty much original condition, the main alteration being the insertion of the lavatories and the windows. Late Georgian warehouses in the town have received much less attention than those Macgregor and Sisson called the 'ancient' ones.⁷ But the fact that the Buoy Store contains much earlier fabric is not

only of interest as an example of municipal frugality, it also enables us to get a better idea of what the older buildings on the Common Staithe looked like, and perhaps one day to tie these materials in with the results of any excavations on the site.



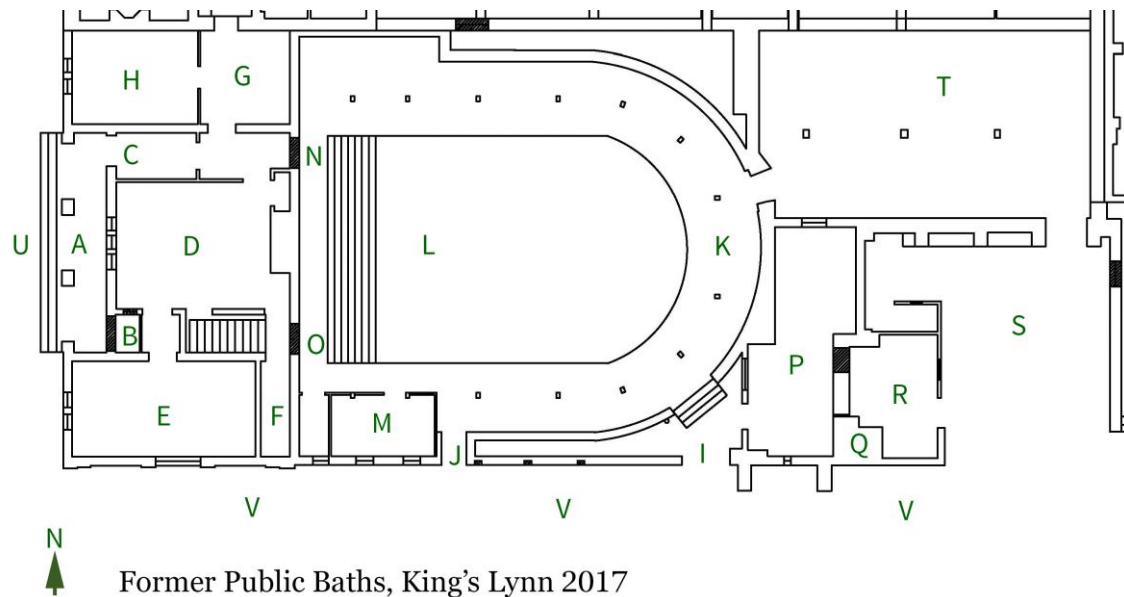
Fig. 75 The south wall of the Buoy Store from inside, showing re-used stone. Detail of HEA Patricia Payne 20-SEP-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 76. Close-up of stone at high level on the south interior wall of the Buoy Store. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

3.2 THE BATHS

Plan B



Former Public Baths, King's Lynn 2017

Key:

A = Loggia

B = south entrance and pay window

C = north entrance

D = present Office

E = present Harbourmaster's Office, probably originally private baths

F = lavatory

G = present Museum, probably originally private baths

H = present Accountant's Office, probably originally private baths

I = double doors

J = 20th-century door

K = Swimming Pool Hall

L = Swimming Pool

M = present kitchen and lavatory

N = blocked door to front of building

O = probable blocked door to front of building

P = current 'lounge', probably originally Fuel Store

Q = chimney

R = Chimney Store

S = Chimney Yard

T = Settling Tank

U = Common Staithe Quay

V = parking area bordering Ferry Street.

Plan drawn by Katie Carmichael. Graphics: Jonathan Kewley. © Historic England

The Baths building (Plan B) is more complicated – not because we do not know its history (it was built, as mentioned, in 1855-56 to the designs of Thomas Oliver junior), but because no plans or descriptions survive to show the original internal arrangements. All that is definite is, first, that we know where the swimming pool was because it survives, and second that at the time of opening, the building was described as containing one large swimming bath, two shower baths, eight slipper baths, a superintendent's house, a boiler, an engine to pump water and large supply tanks.⁸ Campbell's table of public baths throughout the country in 1918 describes the building at Lynn as having six 'slipper and spray baths', four for men and two for women, which is either a mistake by her or suggests that somehow four baths had been lost since opening.⁹

While originally one building, the front and back parts have been divided for many years and, for convenience, will be described separately.

3.2.1 THE FRONT PART



Fig. 77 The west front of the Baths. Photograph Patricia Payne 2-AUG-2017 ©Historic England

The Baths face slightly north of west onto the Common Staithe Quay (Fig. 77). That front is Italianate in style. It is symmetrical and consists of a central three-bay, two-storey block with flanking one-bay, single-storey pavilions. The former is fronted by a loggia (Fig. 78) of three arches with prominent keystones and horizontally-channelled columns, the floor being paved with red and black encaustic tiles; there is a central window of three round-headed lights (each a sliding sash with a central transom) between two entrance doors. The latter are six-panelled (two long above

four short) with semi-circular fanlights above; the north retains a Victorian letterbox and the south a Victorian brass octagonal doorknob.

At first-floor level there are three one-over-one sash windows. The slate roof is gabled at the back (east) but hipped at the front, with a bifurcated chimneystack behind. Each pavilion, which projects slightly further than the loggia, is topped with a triangular pediment supported by a pair of Doric pilasters (Fig. 79) and contains a centrally-placed window, probably originally like the loggia window except of two lights not three; both have had ungainly transom lights inserted in the openings at a relatively early date (they are already there in an undated photograph [Fig. 80] which looks pre-Second World War). Each pediment is topped by a ball on a socle. The front is principally of a brownish-red brick (with recessed sections round the first-floor windows); the mouldings are rendered and currently painted cream.



Fig. 78 (*above left*) Looking north along the loggia on the west front of the Baths; note the encaustic tiles on the floor. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 5-JUL-2017 ©Historic England

Fig. 79 (*above right*) The south-west pavilion of the Baths building, from the west. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 27-JFEB-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 80 The west end of the Baths building in an undated, 1920s or 1930s photograph, showing that the windows had already been altered then. Norfolk Library and Information Service (King's Lynn Library Archives)

The south front, onto a minor street now called Ferry Street but formerly Common Staithe Lane, is rather different (Fig. 81). The most westerly part is the side of the southern pavilion, brick with three plain recessed rectangular panels and rendered Doric pilasters at each end (that to the east without an entablature); the whole bottom third of the section is also rendered. A modern mullion and transom window sits rather awkwardly in the middle of the wall and has presumably been inserted later.



Fig. 81 The south elevation of the front part of the Baths, onto Ferry Street. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 27-FEB-2017 ©Historic England

The style of the building (or at least of the west – show – front) is thus Italianate. The book by the architects Ashpitel and Whichcord, based on their baths at Maidstone, has already been quoted. They seem to have been influential (or at least to have reflected the *Zeitgeist*) on architectural style. They argue that ‘all superfluous ornament, and the adaptation of Gothic or other masks ought to be forbidden, a character of cheerfulness should be given to [the building], which the architect should endeavour to stamp with an expression of its purpose.’¹⁰ Public Baths were very clearly secular buildings, usually supplied by the municipality, and therefore Italianate not Gothic. It may not be coincidental that Italianate is a club style; private baths were, after all, essentially clubs, and middle-class patrons may have found such associations attractive.

Inside, the front section of the Baths building is currently arranged so that, on the first floor, it is all one room, accessed by a staircase running up westwards at its south side. Logically the first floor should have provided residential accommodation for the superintendent (as was the case at Collier Street Baths in Salford and Park Road Baths, Halifax), but it is very small, and perhaps some was downstairs; certainly internal walls on the first floor must have been removed to create the present board room, and the staircase has the feeling of a later insertion.¹¹ In 1881 it was occupied by the superintendant, his wife, their three teenage children and a lodger.¹² There seem to have been only two fireplaces in the whole front block, one on each floor in the back wall, which is surprising. The accommodation must surely have had at least a kitchen range and a parlour fireplace (the rooms with the baths in will therefore have been unheated). Ashpitel and Whichcord recommend that everything in a baths building should be on one floor, and at Maidstone everything was except ‘two bedrooms and some store closets for the superintendent ... over the entrance, and unconnected with the baths or wash-house apartments’; the plan shows stairs leading up to these bedrooms from a small ground-floor apartment of two rooms (both with fireplaces), which leads off the lobby outside the men’s payment window.¹³ This may be taken as confirmation that it is unlikely the first floor at Lynn was the only living accommodation.

At ground floor level the south pavilion is principally one room, the Harbourmaster’s Office, with a lavatory at the east end accessed from the foot of the stairs. Each section of a Victorian baths (ladies’, women’s, gentlemen’s and men’s first and second classes) seems to have had its own lavatory, and presumably there must have been some lavatory accommodation at the baths at Lynn; it is conceivable that the present lavatory at the east end of the south pavilion represents the position of one, at the far end (as at Maidstone) of a room of baths (the present Harbourmaster’s Office).

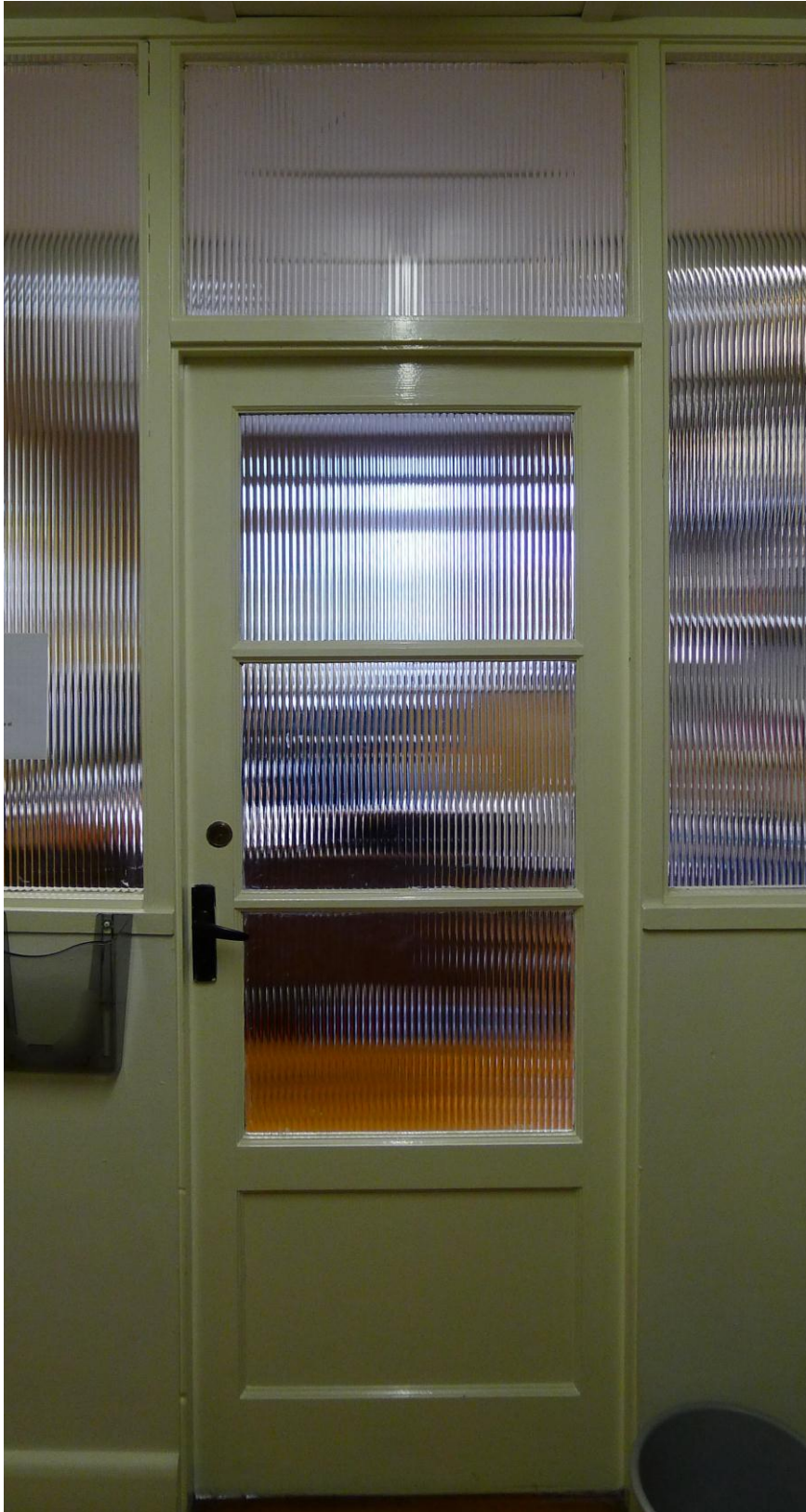


Fig. 82 A mid-20th century screen of wood and ribbed glass in the north pavilion of the Baths. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

The north pavilion is one room divided about halfway across from west to east by a good ribbed glass screen of mid-20th-century date (Fig. 82); the west part forms an office while the eastern part has displays and is called the Museum, but is essentially a corridor, as an opening has been made to the Pilot Office (see below). The remaining space, behind the loggia, is one room, a passage from the north door to the loggia being partitioned off with a glazed screen of late 20th-century appearance. The space between the staircase and the south door to the loggia is a lobby with a window in its north wall opening into the main space. A chimneybreast protrudes from the east into the main office and the first-floor room, although that at ground level is in fact a cupboard at its north end; no chimneypieces survive.

At Maidstone the complex was divided down the middle into men's and women's sections, with separate entrances. The centre (the equivalent of the block at Lynn behind the loggia) consisted of 'a residence for the superintendent, waiting halls for both men and women, and the pay office'.¹⁴ The two doors into the loggia could be interpreted as either separate male and female entrances, or as a public entrance and a private one to the residential accommodation.



Fig. 83 A reconstruction of the layout of the buildings on the Common Staithe in the late 19th century. 125" to 1 mile OS map, surveyed 1883, taken from the Historic England corporate GIS, NTS (Historic Ordnance Survey mapping © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2018). Licence number 000394 and TP 0024. Graphic: Jonathan Kewley

The ground floor spaces available for the slipper baths and shower baths are the two pavilions and the central space (now the main office). Slipper baths were ordinary baths (made of zinc in the first half of the 19th century) with a hinged lid covering the lower parts; when one was bought at Lynn in 1897, presumably as a replacement, it was described as enamelled iron.¹⁵ Comparing the sizes of the pavilions with the spaces allocated for private baths on contemporary plans, it is clear that both pavilions would have been required to provide ten baths (at Bilston five occupied a space approximately 8.4 m by 3.05 m; each pavilion at Lynn is 7 m by 3.15 m.)¹⁶ It is therefore likely that the plan of the front section of Lynn Baths was that the centre provided an entrance or entrances, a waiting area and some accommodation for the superintendent, with the shower and slipper baths in the two pavilions (Fig. 83).

‘Shower-baths’ were unusual in public bath complexes, but Maidstone Baths provide a clue as to what those at Lynn were like; Ashpitel and Whichcord describe them as follows: ‘In addition [to normal first- and second-class baths] are placed there private baths, entirely distinct from the others. These are intended to be fitted up in a superior manner, and, with the apparatus for vapour or shower baths, to be reserved for a higher rate of charge.’¹⁷

The general position seems to have been that there were no changing rooms, and patrons undressed and dried off by the baths. It is unclear whether all the slipper and shower baths were available for both men and women, on different days or at different times, or if a certain number were for one sex and the rest for the other. No traces survive of any partitions between slipper and shower-baths; Cape says that slate was ‘universally adopted’ for such partitions, and that fittings should be porcelain, so as not to rust.¹⁸ He advocated furnishing the bath cubicles with ‘a bath, looking-glass, pegs to hang clothes on, boot-jack, comb, brush, etc’, with a grating to step onto from the bath, and carpet elsewhere. The valves, he recommended, should be outside the room and so under the control of the attendant.¹⁹

At present there are no openings from the front section into the back part of the building. A feature opposite the bottom of the stairs, probably representing the blocking up of one, is the only trace on the west side. On the east (pool) side, the wall is largely covered by a modern mirror, but looking at the wall below, it seems that there may have been an opening at the current foot of the stairs and another to the left (north) of the chimneybreast in the main office; the former is only conjectural and could be proved only if the mirrors were removed from the Swimming Pool Hall and the boarding from the other side, but the latter – the more northerly – appears in an interior photograph of the swimming pool in use (Fig. 84).²⁰ These positions for the doors would be logical, directly opposite the two entrance doors.

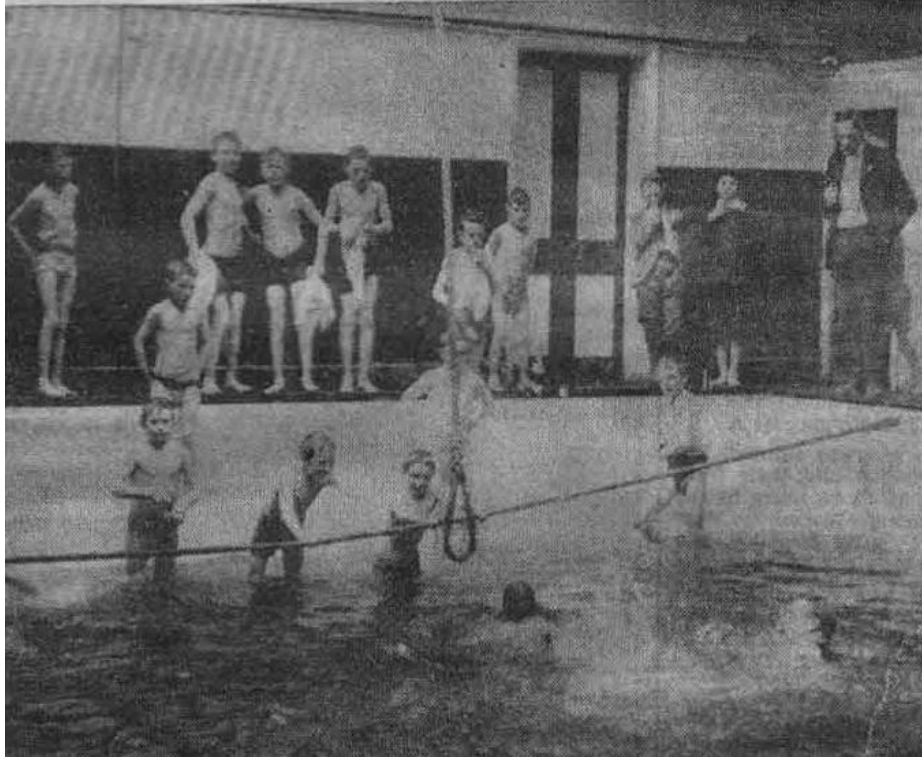


Fig. 84 The Baths in use c 1910, looking north-west; note the door to the front part of the building. Posted on www.kingslynnforums.co.uk by simonspics0271

If this is right, it must be the case that the stairs are an insertion; they make no sense rising up immediately in front of an exiting swimmer and blocking the route from the southern door to the pool. That this southern of the two exterior doors at least was used by the public is suggested by the survival of what looks like a payment window just inside it (an arrangement which replicates that at Bilston, where the space between the two entrances and payment windows is described as an office).²¹

Very few original-looking internal features survive. The doors to the cupboard at the north-east of the main room and the cupboard under the stairs are four-panel polished wood. The four-panel door (the top two panels glazed) at the top of the stairs looks turn of the century. The architraves on the north side of the door into the main office from the north, and on the north side of the door into the Harbourmaster's Office look 19th-century. There is a wooden counter of early 20th-century appearance in the main room, matching that in the Operations Room of the Pilot Office, which is said to have come from a shop in the town.

3.2.2 THE BACK PART



Fig. 85 An aerial view of the eastern part of the Baths complex in 1928. Detail of HEA (Aerofilms Collection) EPW021474 JUN-1928

The more utilitarian-looking part of the Baths building extends back eastwards from the front section (Figs. 85 and 86). It is dominated by the bulk of the Swimming Pool Hall, which presents externally as a large roof, apsidal at the east, rising from a single-storey brick wall facing Ferry Street. The brick in this range is generally more of an orange-red than that of the west front. This wall is punctuated by blank round-headed lancets which echo the front windows. Starting from the west there are three windows with top-hung fanlights and then a door. These are all later insertions which replaced an original three lancets – the windows sometime between 1933 and 1963, the door sometime after 1963.²² The latter was accompanied by a flight of steps (Fig. 87), but they have since been removed; the insertion of the door may relate to what is now the kitchen, which was perhaps a ticket or cash office, possibly when Brown Bros and Taylor used the building in the 1950s.



Fig. 86 The roofscape, looking south-east from the Pilot Office tower. The large roof in the centre is the swimming pool hall. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 87 The south side of the Baths complex c 1980s, showing steps, which are no longer there, to the inserted door on the left. Courtesy of the King's Lynn Conservancy Board



Fig. 88 A view south-east from the Common Staithe Yard in the late 19th or very early 20th century, showing in the distance the Baths chimney, then higher and with a projecting rim. Courtesy of the King's Lynn Conservancy Board

Continuing eastwards along the south front, there are then three of the round-headed lancets. After a gap there are double doors at ground level (not raised like the foot door) with a segmental brick arch above. There is then a single lancet and, at the end of the range, a tall brick chimney; this narrows about three-quarters of the way up its present height, but an old photograph shows that it originally had a projecting rim at the top (Fig. 88). Beyond the chimney is a brick-walled space named here the Chimney Yard, in which has been built a brick leant-to against the east side of the chimney (described in more detail below). The east wall of this yard abuts the wall leading back from the west end of Birtledene. Between the chimney and the easternmost lancet, and between the latter and the double doors, are a pair of brick buttresses, presumably added to support the weight of the chimney (Fig. 89).



Fig. 89 Buttresses supporting the south wall of the Baths.
Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 27-FEB-2017 ©Historic England

The Swimming Pool Hall is in fact more complex than this façade would suggest, for while the west half is conventionally rectangular, the east half is an apsidally-ended rectangle within another rectangle. The spaces outside the apse (which on a plan look like spandrels) are awkward and suggest an architect a little out of his depth. The space to the north of the apse forms an oddly-shaped and inaccessible yard, bounded on the north by the Buoy House (see p. 68) which has a blocked-up window facing onto it, and on the east by the Settling Tank (see below).

The space to the south of the Swimming Pool Hall is roofed in and extends east of the swimming pool to the chimney. It includes the southern ‘spandrel’, the narrow part of which west of the double doors contains an iron water-tank of relatively modest size (Fig. 90).



Fig. 90. The space between the south wall of the Baths (on the left) and the cirving south wall of the Swimming Pool Hall (on the right), looking west.
Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

The current opening in the base of the chimney to the north looks very recent and indeed internal inspection reveals modern blocking-up of a west-facing opening. The space west of the chimney and south-east of the Swimming Pool Hall must therefore have included the boiler room. Ashpitel and Whichcord say that boilers should be in the basement (probably not really an option at Lynn, so near the river) and not only supply hot water to the establishment generally but also pump water to a 'great cistern' in the roof; there is no trace of such a thing at Lynn.

This area has been dry-lined in recent years, and it is thus difficult to get any sense of what was originally here. It has a double-pitched roof running east-west, at the west merging into the keel-like roof of the Swimming Bath Hall, and at the east ending in a staggered gable (the north half projecting a little further east than the south). Ashpitel and Whichcord refer to a stoker at public baths, and clearly a lot of coal would be needed to fuel a boiler; some of the area near the boiler at Lynn must have been a sizeable coal store. The double doors must have given access for coal deliveries (the door to the pool from just inside the double doors seems a modern insertion).

While there were no public wash-houses as part of the complex, there must somewhere have been laundry facilities for the towels which were presumably supplied to all bathers (this certainly had to happen in baths erected under Sir Henry's Act).²³ These may well have been in this area.



Fig. 91 The Swimming Pool hall looking east. Detail of DP217319 2-AUG-2017 Patricia Payne ©Historic England



Fig. 92 The Swimming Pool Hall looking west. Detail of DP217329 2-AUG-2017 Patricia Payne ©Historic England

The Swimming Pool Hall itself is an apsidally-ended rectangle 16 metres east-west and 12 metres north-south (Figs. 91 and 92). It contains the swimming pool, also apsidally-ended, now boarded over but still accessible by a trap door; the boards are

supported on brick pilasters, suggesting an intent that the boarding be permanent. The capacity of the pool seems to have been in line with others in relatively-small towns; it is the same as at Maidstone, for example.²⁴ The apsidal end of the pool can be paralleled elsewhere, for instance at Bilston Baths, Warwickshire, of 1852 (Fig. 93), and Lambeth Baths, Surrey, of 1853, both by the same architects, Ashpitel and Whichcord.²⁵

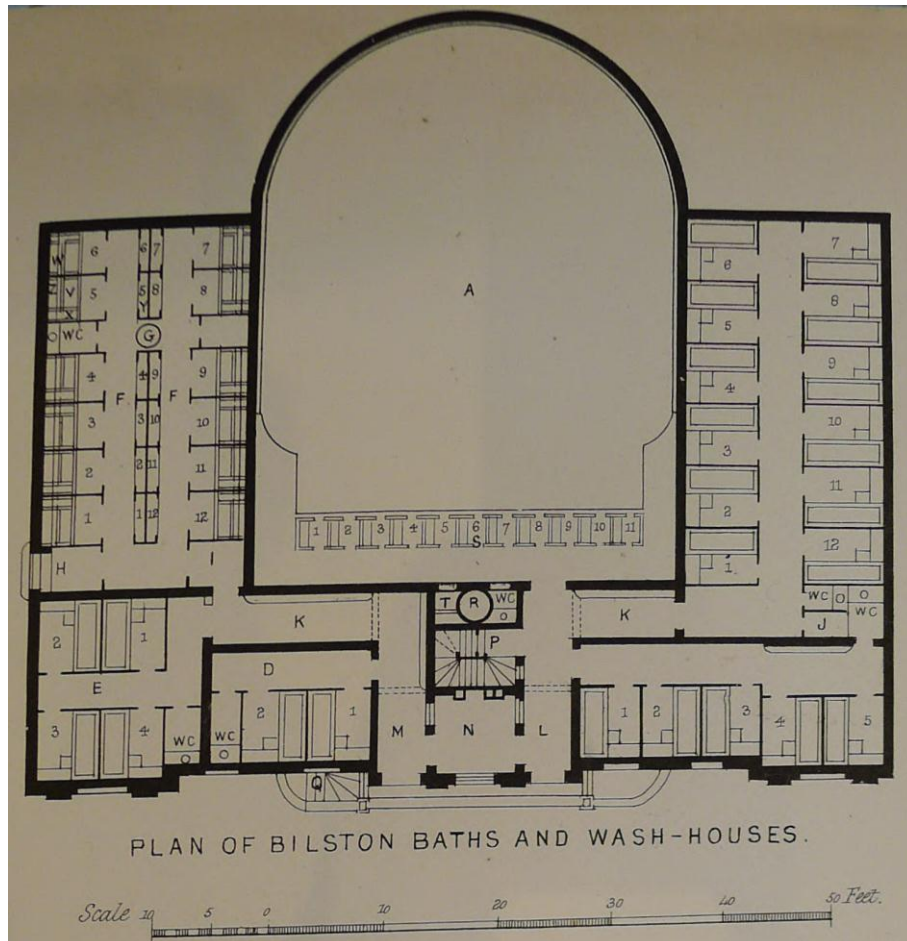


Fig. 93 A plan of Bilston Baths, Staffordshire, from G. A. Cape 1854 *Baths and Wash Houses; the History of their Rise and Progress...* London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co

The entire pool is cement-rendered and appears very plain, with an absence of the tiling one might expect; however, Cornwallis Street Baths, Liverpool, of 1851 had tiling only above water level, with plain cement below; Cape cites the Borough Engineer of Liverpool as stating that swimming baths could be made cheaply of brick and cement.²⁶

The west end consists of a full-width flight of seven cement-rendered steps (Fig. 94). At the east end are the mouths of four pipes, the widest higher up toward the south, the next in size also high up but more or less central, and the other two smaller ones progressively deeper and further north.



Fig. 94 The steps which run the full width of the west end of the swimming pool.

Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 17-JUL-2017 ©Historic England

The roof is scissor-braced. The rafters presumably rise from a hidden wall-plate, but the braces are supported by a row of stout wooden posts joined by a horizontal member just below the roof. There is a further horizontal row of timbers just below at varying heights, presumably added as strengthening and irregular because the method of fixing is by bolts which run through the upright into the end of the horizontal, thus meaning two gaps cannot be filled at the same height, although in a few cases the horizontal runs through the upright allowing two sections to be done at once. The roof is now felted but originally part was glazed, providing natural light (Fig. 95).



Fig. 95 The Baths from the air in 1963; the arrow shows the then-partly-glazed roof of the Swimming Pool Hall. Detail of HEA (Aerofilms Collection) EAW116074 8-JUL-1963.



Fig. 96 St Nicholas' Girls School Swimming Gala in the Swimming Pool Hall in 1919; note the changing cubicles in the background. True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum.

A photograph of the north side of the hall in 1919 (Fig. 96) shows changing cubicles around the wall. This seems to be in line with the position elsewhere (as for example at the Lambeth Baths of 1853, and Mayfield Public Baths, Manchester, of 1856-57).²⁷ At some stage, probably in the first half of the 20th century, two and a half bays at the west end of the south side have been enclosed within an L-shaped wooden partition with a door and windows to the rest of the space; it now contains a kitchen and lavatory (Fig. 97). The north-south arm of the L is immediately west of the foot door to the outside, and they are presumably linked, as discussed above.



Fig. 97 The enclosed section at the south-west corner of the Swimming Pool Hall. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 98 The Settling Tank looking east. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 17-JUL-2017 ©Historic England

To the north-east of the Swimming Pool Hall is the Settling Tank, a rectangular space, about 10 metres east-west by 6 metres north-south, surrounded on all sides by brick walls, that on the north side built up against the Warehouses, and part of the west wall being the wall of the Swimming Pool Hall (Figs. 98 and 99). The floor is of dark grey bricks. Part of its south wall faces the Chimney Yard, and here it is buttressed to its full height at regular intervals, and continuously at low level (Fig. 100). On the east side it abuts the (later) Carpenters' Shop; this has internal buttresses and it is possible that some represent the buttressing which may have existed there before the shop was built. The only openings from the Settling Tank are a gate to the Chimney Yard, a window to the Boiler House, and a door to the Swimming Pool Hall, all of which look like relatively modern insertions (the last

seems to be there in an aerial photograph of 1952). There are various pipes leading out from the tank. One, looking squarish in section, leaves at bottom level at the north end of the west wall (and must thus run through the inaccessible area of the north 'spandrel'). Another is at chest level in the south-west corner.



Fig. 99 The Settling Tank looking west. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 17-JUL-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 100 Buttresses on the outer face of the south wall of the Settling Tank. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 27-FEB-2017 ©Historic England

This space can be interpreted as the Settling Tank, described in 1897 as ‘the tank at the baths used for settling the river water before allowed to run into the Swimming Bath’, in other words where water pumped in from the river rested to allow the silt to settle on the bottom before it was released into the pool. That it held water, and therefore needed very strong walls, is shown by the buttressing on the south and east sides. There is no absolutely conclusive proof of this identification, but the buttressing of an unroofed structure and the presence of the pipes are strong persuasive evidence – and there is nowhere else on site which could be a settling tank. It is clearly shown, with its buttressing – although not named – on the 1883 Ordnance Survey map (see Fig. 83). The walls are all cement-rendered, although the render is coming off in places. In 1897 it was said to be ‘very leaky’ and it was to have the walls stripped and re-rendered and have a new bottom put in at the end of the season.²⁸

At some stage (from the evidence of aerial photographs, after 1930) a roof seems to have been put rather amateurishly on the tank, and the walls are built up by a few inferior courses of brick (a proportion of them white bricks) to take the timbers. The roof had been removed by 1963. Probably connected with this, on the north the render extends above what appears to be tank-top level on other sides, and covers (or covered) the south wall of the Warehouses up to eaves level.

The Chimney Yard lies south of the Settling Tank, east of the Boiler House and west of the remains of Birtledene (or rather of whatever was immediately behind Birtledene). It is a complicated space. On the 1883 Ordnance Survey map (see Fig.

83), the chimney is shown detached at the south end of an entirely-open Chimney Yard. Most of the yard is open today but there is a structure around the chimney which seems to represent several stages of work (Fig. 101). The largest element consists of two walls (north and east) which join with the roadside wall and the east wall of the Boiler House to create more or less a square with the chimney forming the south-west corner.



Fig. 101 The Chimney Store, looking south-west. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017
©Historic England

The roadside wall is of the same brick as the chimney but not bonded into it; the chimney is English bond lower down and Flemish bond above, but the roadside wall is Sussex bond. A wall again of the same brick leads north from the west side of

the chimney for a foot or so. There is then a gap of a couple of inches after which the wall resumes in the same brick and in English bond; this is the east wall of the Boiler Room, and there is a ledged door in it (blocked up inside). At the midpoint of the divided gable of the Boiler Room, a wall runs east, with a straight joint half way along; it is stepped up to the west higher up, suggesting that the western section (which is of the same brick as the gable, and also English bond) may originally have been a buttress. Another wall runs north from the roadside wall east of the chimney to join it and create an enclosure within the Chimney Yard, with the chimney forming its south-west corner. Timbers survive from a monopitch roof over this area, sloping up to the west. It appears on an aerial photograph of 1928 (see Fig. 85). Here this will, for want of any other name, be called the Chimney Store.

The Chimney Store's east wall looks more modern and may have been rebuilt, or perhaps originally it was open to the east. There is a clear opening at the southern end, and north of it what appears to be a blocked-up window. Beyond this the wall looks very modern; it rises above the northernmost section of the older work and, clearly all one build, then turns west, but not as far as the east gable of the Boiler Room, creating a small open-fronted store; there is a small high-level window opening in the north wall. The brick is modern and laid in stretcher bond. It is higher than the east wall of the Chimney Store and roughly level with the north wall of the Chimney Yard as built up.

Some long timbers survive and show that for a period the whole Chimney Yard was roofed; this may tie up with the references to the use of part of the Baths as a lock-up garage in the 1960s. On the evidence of aerial photographs this roofing-in took place sometime between 1933 and 1952. It was presumably then that

The east wall of the Chimney Yard is built against the lower parts of an earlier wall which is described below, in the section on the Birtledene site. At its north end, brickwork one brick wide seems to have been inserted between it and the easternmost buttress on the south wall of the Settling Tank.

3.2.3 GENERAL DISCUSSION

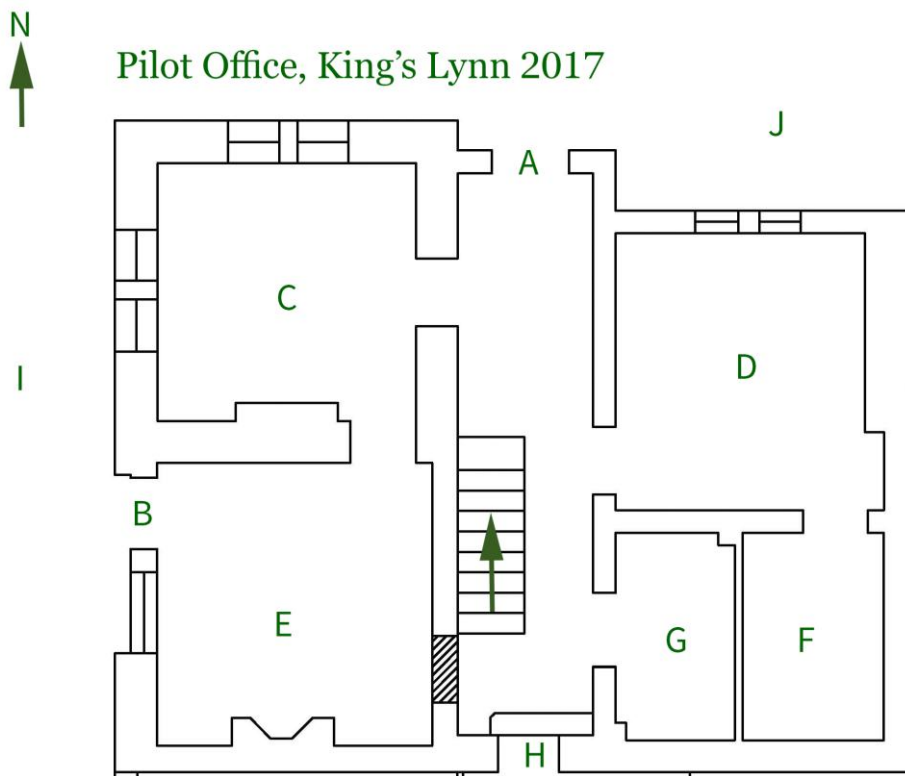
Few public baths survive in England from the mid-19th century. In Gordon and Inglis' list of all surviving indoor pools from 1800 (whether or not intact), Lynn is the sixth oldest.²⁹ The earlier ones are Montpellier Baths, Cheltenham (1806, listed Grade II, now a theatre), Royal York Baths, Regent's Park, London (1820, Grade II, now the Royal College of Music), Lockwood Spa Baths, Huddersfield (1827, Grade II, now in light industrial use), Bolton Baths (1847, Grade II, now a business centre), and the Baths at Hereford (1850, unlisted, now a masonic hall). The next in date on the list after Lynn (although possibly in fact contemporary) are Collier Street Baths, Salford, listed Grade II* by Thomas Worthington.³⁰ They were much

grander internally than Lynn Baths, with blue Minton tiles on the bottom and sides of the pool and the internal walls clad in porcelain.

It is unclear from currently-available sources (principally listing descriptions) what remains of the interiors of all these. At Lynn nothing original survives in the front block, nor – except part of the chimney – in the service area, but the Swimming Pool Hall and the Settling Tank are reasonably intact. It seems likely that some buried pipework will survive and might still run from the Settling Tank into the pool, and possibly from one or both into the river; this would benefit from further investigation.

3.3 THE PILOT OFFICE

Plan C



Key:

A = main entrance

B = former mooring dues entrance

C = present Operations Room

D = present Pilot Office

E = present Deputy Harbourmaster's Office, originally Mooring Dues Office

F = lavatory

G = kitchen

H = modern doorway connecting to former Public Baths

I = Common Staithe Quay

J = Common Staithe Yard

Plan drawn by Katie Carmichael. Graphics: Jonathan Kewley. © Historic England

The Pilot Office (Plan B) is at the north-west corner of the buildings now standing as an island on the Common Staithe (Figs. 102). It matches the Baths in style and materials. It is L-shaped with arms running north-south and west-east. Its main feature is a four-storey octagonal tower (Fig. 103), 45 feet high, which projects slightly at the north-west corner and is the join of the L.³¹ The entablature of the

Baths is continued the length of the west front, and round to the north front of the tower. There are no pilasters below it, and instead prominent quoins to the north-east, north-west and south-west corners of the tower. There is a parapet above the entablature. The tower is square at ground-floor level with splay-feet effecting the transition to the octagonal part above.



Fig. 102 The north front of the Pilot Office. Photograph Jonathan Kewley 2-MAY-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 103 The tower of the Pilot Office, seen from Trinity Quay to the north. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 27-FEB-2017 ©Historic England

The west front is of two bays, with, at ground-floor level on the northern bay, paired round-headed sashes, and on the single-storey southern bay a round-headed doorway with plain fanlight, almost attached to a window on its south which matches one of the pair on the other bay (except that it is a little wider); the top of it is markedly higher than that of the door.

The north front is of three bays, the westernmost being the tower; at ground floor level there is a window matching that on the west side. In the middle bay is a round-headed four-panel door with a fanlight with a single mullion, and at first-floor level a small round window (perhaps intended to reference a porthole). In the east bay, at both ground- and first-floor level, are windows like those on the west and south of the tower.

At first-floor level the tower originally had no windows, but a Crittall-type metal casement window has been punched through not quite centrally on the north front at some time in the mid-20th century; it is not there in a photograph of 1937 (Fig. 104) but must stylistically have been inserted not that long afterwards. At second-floor level there are small round windows (like the one over the north door) on the north, south, east and west faces. The third-floor is effectively a lantern, with paired round-headed windows like those lower down forming a continuous wall of windows all around the octagon.



Fig. 104 The Pilot Office from the north-west in 1937. Norfolk Library and Information Service (King's Lynn Library Archives)

On its eastern boundary the Pilot Office directly abuts the Buoy Store (see p.68), as it does the Baths on the south; the former external wall, complete with hopper and downpipe, is visible from the Pilot Office hall, showing that the Pilot Office does not have a south wall of its own, or at least not on its western two bays.³² The position for the eastern bay is more complicated. The east wing has a south wall, of course, which abuts the yard, now filled in. From the Pilot Office stairs it can be seen through the high-level window that there is a brick wall which seems to buttress

that part of the north wall of the front range of the Baths as extends east of the south wall of the Pilot Office hall.

The space between the arms of the L was originally open; one high-level six-over-six sash window looks out over this space at first-floor level. The west wall of the Buoy Store is partly skimmed which makes it difficult to tell if the east gable of the Pilot Office rests on an original Buoy Store wall, if there are two walls back to back, or if the whole wall was totally rebuilt.

All the roofs are slated. The tower has a low-pitched octagonal cap. The north wing has a double-pitched roof running north-south with a gable and small chimneystack at the north end. The roof of the single-storey south wing is hipped at the south end. The extension covering the former yard has a modern flat roof. The central part of the building, running south from the north door to the southern boundary and containing a hall and stairs only, has its own roof, hipped at north and south ends.

The whole building is built in English bond of a brownish-red brick, similar to that used for the west part of the Baths. The arches above the windows and doors are of yellow brick; the voussoirs extend right round the portholes with those at the four points of the compass emphasised to give the effect of a cruciform sunburst. The splay-feet of the tower look rendered and coloured to match the brick. The entablature, quoins and windowsills are painted cream but in an early photograph which includes a window-sill it appears unpainted (Fig. 105).



Fig. 105 (above left) A pre-First World War photograph of pilots outside the Pilot Office, showing the window-sill unpainted. Norfolk Library and Information Service (King's Lynn Library Archives)

Fig. 106 (above left) The arms of the Borough of King's Lynn on the Pilot Office tower. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 27-FEB-2017 ©Historic England

There is raised lettering on the west-facing entablatures, to the north 'PILOTS' OFFICE.' and on the south 'MOORING DUES.' The arms of King's Lynn appear in a cartouche on the west-facing gable between the broaches of the tower (Fig. 106); from ground-level they appear to be stone. The cartouche does not look Victorian; perhaps it was brought from the previous Pilot Office.³³ Inside, the north door opens into a long, narrow stone-flagged hall, all except the northernmost part being open to the first-floor ceiling. Stairs lead up northwards in a single flight with plain spindles from near the south end; the newel posts look original (Fig. 107).

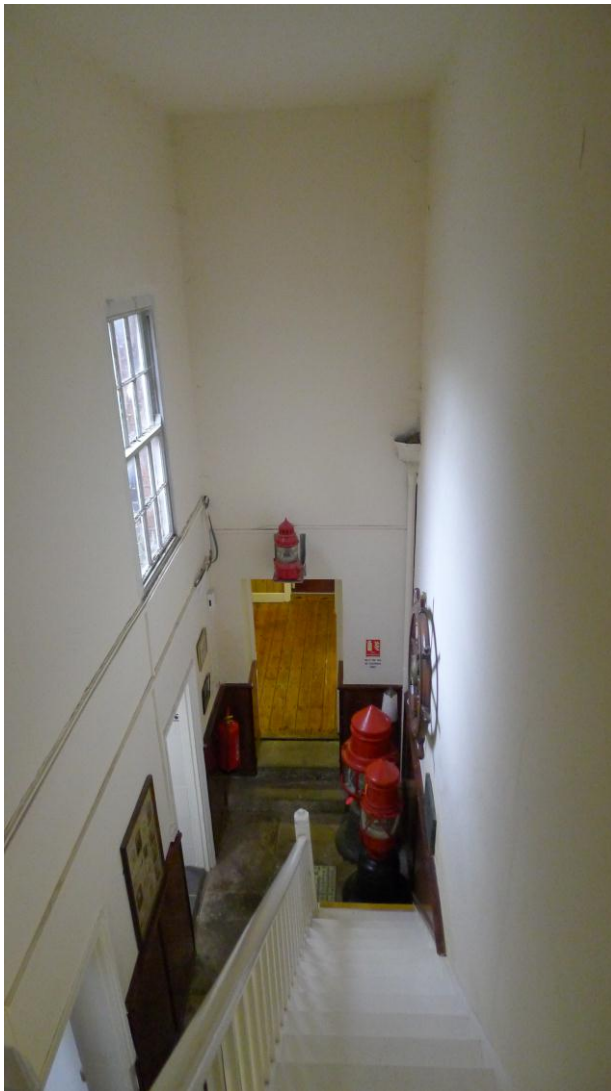


Fig. 107 (*above left*) The stairs in the Pilot Office, looking south. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 108 (*above right*) The doorway from the room now called the Pilot Office to the lavatory behind. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

To the east of the entrance door is a room, now confusingly called the Pilot Office, with a north-facing window, a blocked-up fireplace in its east wall, and at the east end of its south wall a four-panel door (the upper panels glazed with speckled frosted glass of early 20th-century appearance) (Fig. 108), leading to a large lavatory which occupies half the former yard. The other half is taken up by a modern kitchen, accessed from the hall, again through an old door with an old architrave. At the far southern end of the hall a door has been knocked through to the Baths, presumably when the Conservancy Board took it over as offices in 1961. To the west of the entrance door, up two steps, is what is now called the Port Operations Room; this has north- and west-facing windows commanding the river. A door (with an old architrave) leads from this to the room at the south-west corner, now the Deputy Harbourmaster's Office. This has a window looking west and a now disused external door next to it. A door to the hall has been blocked up.

On the first floor, a small galleried landing with a north-facing porthole window has two doors off it. That to the east gives onto a room with a north-facing window now used for archives; it has an exceptionally narrow chimneybreast, with a blocked-up fireplace. The door on the west leads to a room, originally unlit but now with the mid-20th-century metal window. From it a spiral staircase leads up to the Tower Room which occupies the whole top of the tower and has windows on all sides.³⁴

The Corporation Property Committee had laid down detailed specifications for the architect, and these can be matched up with the structure as it exists today. There was to be a look-out tower high enough to see the river, and two intercommunicating rooms twelve feet square, one the headman's private office, the other a room for pilots to wait in when on call; presumably these are the present Port Operations Room and Pilot Office (the rooms each side of the north door, which in fact communicate across a corridor). Another room the same size was to house the Collector of Mooring Dues; this must be the present Deputy Harbourmaster's Office, as it says 'Mooring Dues Office' outside.³⁵

Very little original survives inside the building. All the doors are four-panel with matching architraves, presumably original. The counter in the Operations Room looks 19th-century but, contrary to Pevsner and Wilson, is reported to have been brought to the building from a shop in the town when it was refitted in the late 20th century.³⁶ The Deputy Harbourmaster's Office has a fireplace opening of triangular section. This room also has tongue and groove panelling up to just below door-top height on its east and west walls (with a very small square of Anaglypta on part) and a full-height panelled cupboard in three sections vertically to the east of the chimneybreast.

There is a weather-vane atop the tower with a red, black and white painted wind-gauge dial on the Tower Room ceiling (Fig. 109). The latter appears original although the vane is a modern replacement.³⁷



Fig. 109 The dial of the wind-gauge on the ceiling of the Tower Room. Detail of DP217318 20-SEP-2017 Patricia Payne ©Historic England

The Pilot Office is an example of an unusual building type, although clearly connected on the one hand with lighthouses and the other with roof-top lanterns. That it is based on a Georgian predecessor which in turn was based on an earlier Stuart structure is of interest in the town's history.

3.4 THE ARCHES (currently relocated)



Fig. 110 The main part of the arcade from the Common Staithe, now in the Tower Gardens, looking from the north-north-west. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 111 The other part of the arcade now in Tower Gardens; a view from the north-east. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

The medieval arches referred to above, originally behind Smetham's House (see p 20) are now in the Tower Gardens in Lynn (Figs. 110 and 111). The main range consists of a length of flint wall containing an arcade of three complete stone two-centred arches without any capitals. The west end of the wall is faced with dressed stone in the form of alternate courses of quoins and through-stones. At the back (south) there are square openings enclosing the arches and edged with old bricks.

Above, to each side and between these is rubble stone. There is a separate structure consisting of another rather better-preserved arch, attached to some flintwork at the east and one side of another arch at the west. Separate from this is the jamb and beginnings of the springing of another arch, presented in the current layout as the other part of this latter partial arch. There is then a small piece of random stone wall.



Fig. 112 The arcade in situ in Bank Lane c 1908. This view is taken from the north-west; the two-storey building in the distance, at right angles to the lane, is Smetham's House. Norfolk Museums Service (Lynn Museum)

So far as can be worked out from photographs and a drawing from when the arches were *in situ* (Figs. 112 and 113; see also Fig. 39), the present arrangement of the arches in the Tower Gardens replicates their alignment and relationship to each other, but omitting the brick and the wooden gates which joined them. No interior photographs of the building of which they were part survive, so it is unclear how accurate the south face of the reconstruction is.

Some medieval London riverside warehouses were above arcades, which have been interpreted as spaces for the temporary storage of bales or crates and for bartering and the examination of goods.³⁸ That may have been the case here, either as part of the Trinity Guild's Common Staithe or, if that was narrower north-south,

neighbouring private premises. It is noteworthy that the centre arch of the three led to stairs (seen best in Fig. 113).

We would learn much more about medieval Lynn and its westward expansion towards the river were it ever possible to excavate their site - and especially the front (eastern) portion of the Smetham's House plot, onto the Tuesday Market Place, which seems not to have been disturbed by any modern construction as the lavatory site further west will have been.

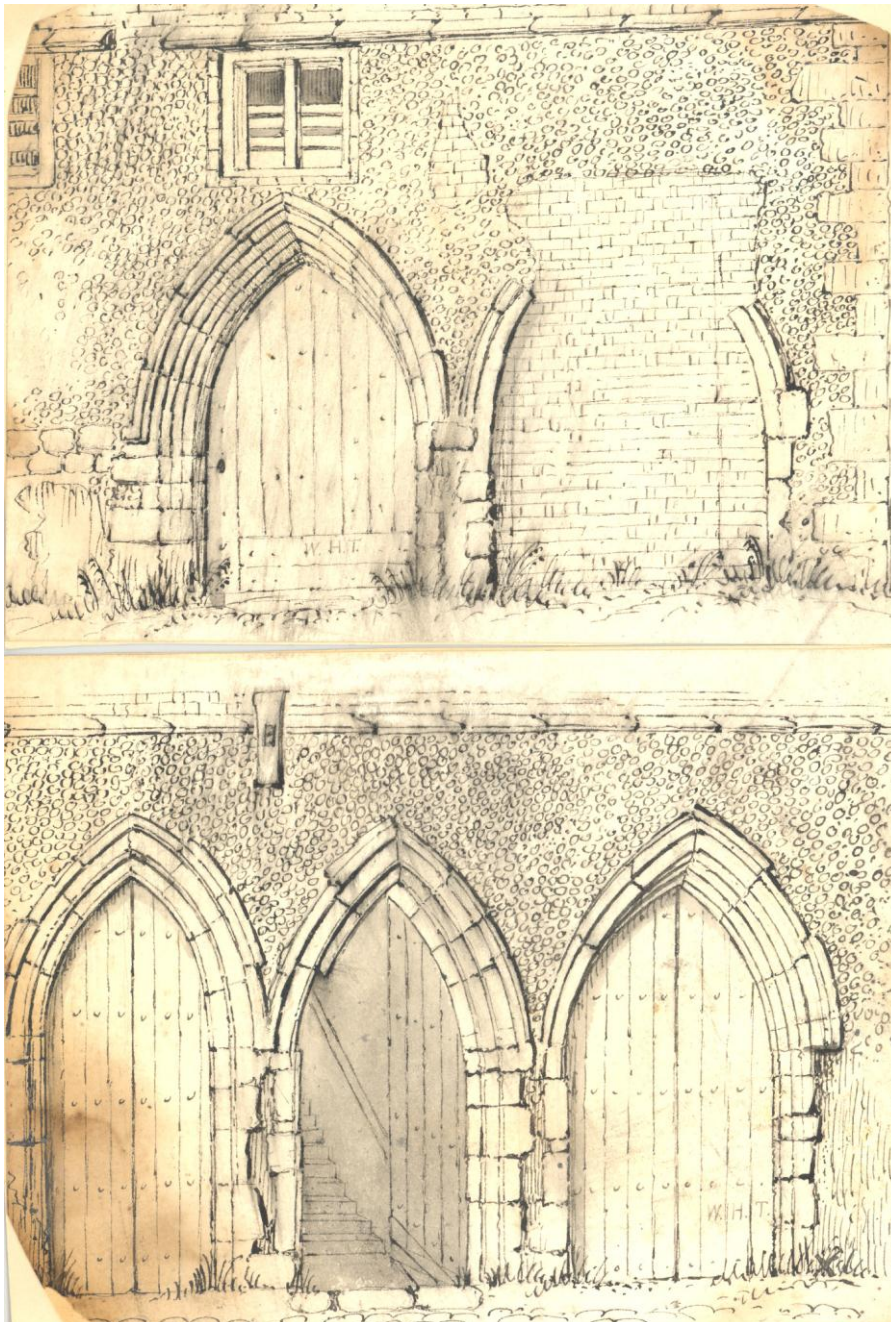


Fig 113 An anonymous, undated drawing of the arcade when *in situ*; note the staircase visible inside the central arch. True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum

The Arches, although now *ex situ*, are important as some of what appear to be very few medieval survivals west of the line of the Tuesday Market Place and King Street, and in fact (with the possible exception of the walls discussed in Section 3.5), the only standing remains of the pre-nineteenth-century Common Staithe. It would be an imaginative addition to public understanding of the 'Story of Lynn' to restore them to their original site.

3.5 BIRTLEDENE SITE



Fig. 114 Looking east along Ferry Street between the Wars, with the steep gable of Birtledene visible in the background. True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum

The most intriguing part of the Common Staithe site today is the far south-east corner. Its history has been set out above. We know that immediately to its east there was a medieval building, that containing the arches now in the Tower Gardens. We know, too, that the site itself was part of the original south range of the Common Staithe complex, with a range of warehouses on its north side and an attached range of mixed warehouses and cottages on the south side, perhaps rebuilt as part of the Elizabethan and Jacobean reorganisation of the area but perhaps, like the building with the arches, incorporating ancient fabric. We know, too, that two of these cottages survived, as Birtledene, into the 1960s (Fig. 114, and see also Figs. 41 and 42).³⁹ The question is what early fabric may still survive.

A brick wall approximately 16 metres long runs east-west from the east end of the Chimney Yard (Figs. 115 and 116). It seems to be double-skinned, with the northern skin having partially collapsed; where it has not, it is largely cement-rendered. Part of the collapse includes cobbles. The south skin is finished on top with a course of headers on end; the extreme east end of the wall appears to have been rebuilt recently. It was the back wall of Birtledene before its demolition. There are no openings in it, which is consistent with the back-to-back nature of the buildings. That it is double-skinned suggests that the two ranges were not built simultaneously but at different times, and were structurally separate.

From the west end of this wall another wall runs north approximately 6 m. to the south-west corner of the Carpenters' Shop (Fig. 117). Its lower levels on the west side are hidden by a wall which appears to be part of the Chimney Yard. The brick of this wall looks pre-19th-century (in English bond) up until about shoulder height, when there is a course of headers on end, and the brick above (which is stretcher bond) looks 19th-century or later. This last matches other work in the Chimney Yard and appears to represent a raising of this wall above the level of the header course to take the later roofing-in of the whole Chimney Yard. About three-quarters of the way northwards there is a square of early 19th-century-looking bricks rising above the header line. There are also two blocked openings nearer Ferry Street. At the northernmost end there is what appears to be a buttress like those on the south wall of the Settling Tank, with later-looking brick built above it.

This wall cannot form part of Birtledene (it is north of its north wall) and it is clear from its construction that it is not part of the Baths complex. It must, therefore, be a survival of the buildings on the site before the range between the Baths and the Tuesday Market Place was (except for Birtledene) demolished at the turn of the 20th century.

The area north of the long east-west wall currently forms a yard for the Carpenters' Shop (Fig. 118), bounded by the other wall on the west. Its east boundary is not permanently demarcated; at the time of writing it is enclosed by metal hoardings, but the land in the Conservancy Board's ownership stretches a little further east. Further east still are modern public lavatories.



Fig. 115 The double-skinned wall running east-west parallel with Ferry Street, and seen here from the north. The further skin was the back wall of Birtledene and the nearer seems to have been the back wall of one of the warehouses on the Common Staithe.

Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 5-JUL-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 116 The back wall of Birtledene, seen from the south (i.e. the inside when the cottage was standing. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 27-FEB-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 117 Looking west from the yard south of the Carpenters' Shop, showing a wall which seems to be a dividing wall between units of the old south range on the Common Staithe, probably much rebuilt. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 5-JUL-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 118 The yard south of the Carpenters' Shop, looking east. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 27-FEB-2017 ©Historic England

A detailed study, comparing these walls and the brick and stone re-used in the Buoy Store with other buildings in King's Lynn would be worthwhile and might help our understanding of the evolution of the buildings on the Common Staithe. Such a study is beyond the scope of this report, but Paul Drury argues that brick starts to be used in East Anglia in externally-visible contexts from the early 15th century onwards.⁴⁰

3.6 THE CARPENTERS' SHOP



Fig. 119 The Carpenters' Shop from the south. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 5-JUL-2017 ©Historic England

The building known as the Carpenters' Shop lies to the east of all the other buildings in the occupation of the Conservancy Board (Figs. 119 and 120). It abuts the Engineers' Store (the 1834 warehouse) and the Settling Tank on the west but has no internal communication except a blocked-up hatch to the former. At its north-west corner the brickwork is bonded into the earlier north wall of the Engineers' Store in dovetail fashion (Fig. 121). It is single-storey under a double-pitched slate roof running east-west with a gable at each end. It is built of hard red brick in English bond, plain except for two projecting stretcher courses acting as bargeboards on each gable, projecting kneelers on each gable, and the use of dark engineering brick for the lower courses of the north-east corner. In the east wall are five identical metal-framed windows, each of twenty panes, four panes wide and

five tall; the central two on the top two rows form a top-hung opening.⁴¹ There are concrete lintels, and the window-sills are of dark engineering brick of rounded profile. There are wide doors at each end, that on the north wooden and sliding, with a wicket and roughly central, but those on the south hinged double wooden doors faced externally in metal and situated at the west end of that front. The north doors are flat-headed with a course of headers above a lintel and with the jambs of dark engineering brick of rounded profile, but the south doors are under a segmental arch of two courses of headers on end. Their size would suggest that both are vehicular, but rather oddly those on the north are raised three courses of brick above external ground level with no step or ramp.



Fig. 120 The Carpenters' Shop from the north-east. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 27-FEB-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 121 Dovetail bonding between the Carpenters' Shop (left) and the Engineers' Store (right) Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

Internally there is a low ceiling which seems to be supported on brick columns between the windows and at equivalent positions on the west wall; the two southernmost of these may incorporate buttresses to the Settling Tank. It was purpose-built about 1920 to increase the accommodation available to the Conservancy Board; the name of the architect is unknown. It appears largely unaltered.

3.7 THE QUAY OLD AND NEW



Fig. 122 The river frontage at Trinity Quay, looking north towards the Wash. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England

The river frontage of the HAZ site consists of three parts. At the far north (Fig. 122), there is no quay, just grass-backed mudflats with, at the east, a path in front of the west front of Trinity Quay. From opposite the south-west corner of Trinity Quay a concrete embankment then runs south-south-west as far as the north-west corner of the Crown and Mitre. At its northern end metal gates can be shut across the path to Trinity Quay if very high water is likely (Fig. 123). Immediately behind it is a paved pedestrian walkway, raised above the level of the Common Staithe Yard and bounded on this inland side by railings atop a brick retaining wall; at intervals on the landward side are embrasures for park benches. It stops level roughly with the north of the Pilot Office, with a short flight of steps down to car park level.



Fig. 123 The raised walkway along the river front of the Common Staithe; note the metal flood gate on the right. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 6-JUN-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 124 The quayside at the Common Staithe from the balcony of the Public Baths, showing the flood defences with the clear concreted area belonging to the Conservancy Board in the foreground. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 4-JUL-2017 ©Historic England

The area within the concrete wall south of this is fenced off and used by the Conservancy Board, whose property it is (Fig. 124). To the west of the embankment is an extensive area of grass-covered flats to which steps lead down.



Fig. 125 The southernmost part of the old Common Staithe Quay, its brickwork still visible. Norfolk Library and Information Service (King's Lynn Library Archives)

Opposite the Baths is a concreted area outside this concrete embankment, on which buoys are stored. On its west side is a brick-built, stone-topped quay, quite a bit lower than the concrete embankment, with stone quoins (visible only from the area described in the next paragraph) and a stone top edging. The brickwork, in English bond, looks of some age; it is presumably the water wall referred to in 1853 but repaired on various occasions (see Section 2.7) (Fig. 125).⁴² A large iron drainpipe leads out from it (possibly from the Baths). The line of this quay can be traced in the car park, running north-east almost as far as the east end of Trinity Quay.



Fig. 126 The scaffolding jetty by the Crown and Mitre. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 3-JUL-2017
©Historic England

Finally, to the south, west of the Crown and Mitre, is an unembanked area with grass merging into mudflats. There is a rudimentary jetty built of scaffolding against which fishing boats can berth (Fig. 126). This whole area has been roughly fenced off from Ferry Street and appears to be used by the Crown and Mitre.

The car park which covers most of the Common Staithe is largely featureless except for the top of the old quay wall, referred to above. At the south-west corner of Gurney's is a cannon acting as a bollard (Fig. 127).

Cobbles survive in the carriageway in front of the west facade of the Pilot Office and Baths (Fig. 128), on the pavement at the corner of Ferry Street and the Common Staithe Quay, where they are partly covered with asphalt, as an unkerbed pavement along the west front north of the loggia, and all along the north front of the Pilot Office and Warehouses as far as the east end of the Engineers' Store (except for where York stone paving leads up to the north door of the Pilot Office and the doors to the Buoy House). There is also York stone paving in front of the Baths loggia.



Fig. 127 The cannon acting as a bollard at the south-west corner of the former Gurney's House. It is on the National Heritage List for England. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 2-MAY-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 128 The cobbled carriageway on the west side of the Public Baths. Note the cobbles visible under the tarmac on the pavement on the right. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 2-MAY-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 129. The northern boundary of the HAZ site (also the northern boundary of the car park). Beyond is Trinity Quay. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 27-FEB-2017 ©Historic England



Fig. 130 The former coachman's cottage on Water Lane. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 2-MAY-2017 ©Historic England

There is no vegetation on the site except low, salt-tolerant plants on the riverbank, and *Phormium tenax* and similar planting along the walkway. Until the 1950s there was at least one mature tree in the garden of Gurney's.

Endnotes

- ¹ Arches: List entry number 1290265 under the name Stone arches in Tower Gardens. Cannon: List entry number 1212506 under the name Cannon bollard to rear of no. 21 Tuesday Market Place
- ² List entry number 1195305, under the name King's Lynn Conservancy Board Offices.
- ³ See colour photograph 1 in King's Lynn and West Norfolk Community Services ; group value does not seem to have been considered when permission was given to demolish the surviving parts of the Market Hall.
- ⁴ 'Norfolk red' as described by Higgins, *Brown Brick* 14
- ⁵ Bates 44, 57-59. It is not the only stone used on the Common Staithe; some carstone, a honey-brown stone quarried principally at Snettisham, was found in the borehole behind the Corn Exchange (British Geological Survey TF62SW217 dated 16 June 1994).
- ⁶ Claude J W Messent 1967 *A Thousand Years of Norfolk Carstone 967 – 1967: An Architectural and Geological Survey of a Building Stone quarried in Norfolk*. Stibbard, Norfolk: published by the author, 64
- ⁷ As described by J E M Macgregor and M Sisson 1948 *King's Lynn: Report and Survey of the Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest prepared for the Corporation of King's Lynn* London: SPAB for King's Lynn Borough Council 18.
- ⁸ *The Builder* 26th July 1856; *The Builder* 24th March 1855
- ⁹ Campbell, Appendix 1.
- ¹⁰ Ashpitel and Whichcord 20
- ¹¹ I Gordon and S Inglis 2009 *Great Lengths: The historic indoor swimming pools of Britain*. Swindon: English Heritage 46 (Collier Street; it is actually the second floor), 47 (Halifax).
- ¹² Census.
- ¹³ Ashpitel and Whichcord 15, Plate 2 (ground-floor plan).
- ¹⁴ Ashpitel and Whichcord 16
- ¹⁵ Gordon and Inglis p. 41; King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC/1/15 (Property Committee 11th March 1897)
- ¹⁶ For Bilston, Cape (plan on un-numbered plate)
- ¹⁷ Showers were unusual even sixty years later (Campbell 41-42); Ashpitel and Whichcord 17.
- ¹⁸ Cape 61-62. Maidstone had slate partitions and porcelain fittings (Ashpitel 17)
- ¹⁹ Cape 60.
- ²⁰ C. 1910, posted by simonspics0271 on www.kingslynnforum.co.uk (accessed 23 October 2017)
- ²¹ *The Builder* Vol X no. 502 p. 597
- ²² Evidence from aerial photographs
- ²³ Ashpitel and Whichcord 8
- ²⁴ 30,000 gallons (Ashpitel and Whichcord 17)
- ²⁵ Gordon and Inglis 38, 40
- ²⁶ Gordon and Inglis 37; Cape 59
- ²⁷ Laing and Laing 13, Cape 59.
- ²⁸ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/15 p. 210 (Property Committee 7th July 1897)
- ²⁹ Gordon and Inglis 278
- ³⁰ A J Pass 1988 *Thomas Worthington: Victorian architecture and social purpose* Manchester: Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society 76-9
- ³¹ The height is according to a contemporary source (*Norfolk Chronicle* 10th October 1863)
- ³² Where there is also a manhole cover.
- ³³ Dr Roger Bowdler suggested this (on Twitter)
- ³⁴ Replaced in 2003 (Paul Bailey, Deputy Harbourmaster, pers. comm)
- ³⁵ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC2/1/6 Property Committee minutes 30th July 1863; NC 1st August 1863

³⁶ Pevsner and Wilson 505-06; Patrick Jary (Harbourmaster) and Paul Bailey (Deputy Harbourmaster), *pers. comm.*

³⁷ Paul Bailey, *pers. comm.*

³⁸ Schofield 30-31 (the Steelyard, Queenhithe and Billingsgate).

³⁹ King's Lynn Borough Archives KL/TC1/60 (Hall 2nd May 1962)

⁴⁰ P Drury 2006 'The Use of Brick in East Anglia: Functional or Cultural', *NHBG Newsletter* No. 11 p. 3

⁴¹ On the next-to-northernmost window this has been replaced by a ventilation hood.

⁴² *Norfolk News* 17th December 1853

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL¹



Fig. 131 The excavation sites referred to in this section

- A= Common Staithe.
- B = 46 King Street, 50 King Street and Marks & Spencer's, Surrey Street.
- C= Thoresby College.
- D= Fell's Warehouse and Lattice House.
- E= Raynham House.

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As there has been no previous archaeological investigation anywhere on the Common Staithe HAZ site, any suggestions as to its archaeological potential are

based on what we know about the history and context of the site and on archaeological excavations in the surrounding area (Fig. 131). [These include one just outside the HAZ site, but on the historic Common Staithe (within the Corn Exchange),² one just inland at 50 King Street,³ and a number on the waterfront further south, notably Thoresby College Courtyard.⁴ It should be noted that comparisons to other archaeological sites reflect only the condition of archaeological deposits at the time they were excavated, and the nature of ground conditions may have changed. The published interpretation of the Corn Exchange excavation⁵ is somewhat problematic in terms of its relationship with documentary evidence (see section 2.2).

Date

Based on documentary evidence and previous excavations in the historic core, most archaeological deposits are likely to date from the 13th century onwards, as before this the riverbank was further east and the area of the Common Staithe was underwater (see Figs. 8, 9 and 10). Excavation is likely to reveal a succession of shorelines, moving westward; the earliest berths may have been on a beach rather than against a proper quay. The later medieval and post-medieval periods will be the major focus generally, but deeper deposits have the potential to hold information about the pre-medieval environment and land reclamation processes in this part of the town.

Extent

A substantial part of the site was reclaimed from the river over the course of the second half of the 20th century (see Fig. 54). Man-made archaeological remains are most likely to be found on the remainder of the site, which seems to have been dry land since at least the 16th century. The most intensively occupied area is likely to be that shown as built-up on 17th-century and later maps (see Figs. 13, 15, 27 and 30), but the areas shown as open may have been used for various purposes (such as the bell-pit found in the Corn Exchange excavations).⁶ The Common Staithe was in one ownership from the 16th to 20th centuries, but property boundaries in the Middle Ages may have been different, and so it is possible that there might have been substantial buildings on what were later (and are now) open areas (the central yard and the lanes north and south); they would probably have been like the long, narrow plots to the south, on King Street, which might include back areas occupied by halls or used for storage and the dumping of refuse; this has the potential to reveal significant archaeological information.

It is very difficult to comment on the vertical extent of any potential archaeological remains without excavation on site. The nearest excavations, within the Corn Exchange immediately north of the HAZ site, revealed a 2m depth of former

riverbank deposits.⁷ The Thoresby College excavations (see below) had to be abandoned at 4ft OD because of heavy waterlogging.⁸

Borehole data as evidence of land reclamation has already been mentioned in section 2.1; it can also assist with questions of the dating and use of the site, and provide evidence of archaeological deposits generally. Data for the area available from the British Geological Survey (BGS) was analysed for the project by Matt Canti (Historic England). The borehole to the west of the Corn Exchange⁹ (within the HAZ area) contained archaeological deposits of around 2.1m. in depth ('MADE GROUND soft brown very sandy silty clay with some brick/carstone fragments [and] shell and bone fragments'), although with 'splinters of wood' as far down as 8.0 m (it is unclear exactly what these were). The borehole at the eastern end of Trinity Quay,¹⁰ just north of the Common Staithe, contained archaeological deposits down to 8.40 m ('MADE GROUND loose to medium dense back silt containing much brick rubble, gravel, pottery and bone fragments'). Pottery especially has the potential for dating, and brick (from our imperfect knowledge of when it was first used) may give a *terminus post quem* for the particular level. Deposits down to 8 m or so are exceptional, and cannot be explained in the absence of proper excavation; it is just possible that the boreholes found the reservoir referred to in section 2.7. Equally, and unsurprisingly, the borehole on the reclaimed land at the west of Trinity Quay¹¹ (and just inland of the northern strip of the HAZ area) did not show any evidence of deposits of habitation, only 'made ground' of silty sand down to 4.80m.

A programme of coring in the historic town of Great Yarmouth¹² revealed that the BGS cores (taken for non-archaeological purposes) significantly underestimated the depth of archaeological deposits, so all figures derived from the latter should be treated with some caution.¹³

Type of Material and Waterlogging

The site has the potential to contain a huge variety of buried archaeological material, including almost anything relating to medieval and post-medieval domestic occupation as well as small-scale industry and local and international trade. This could include the remains of wooden, stone or brick buildings, quays, wharves and jetties, various types of property boundary, boats, and commercial and domestic activity and waste. It could include coins, leather, textiles and organic residues, not just local but brought by merchants potentially from far away. The riverside location is likely, from precedent in Lynn and elsewhere (see section 2.1), to produce material from either on or off the site which was deposited in the water, either as rubbish or to build up ground behind a new quayside. There might also be plant and animal remains revealing information about the contemporary environment.

Though local variation is inevitable, previous archaeological excavations in King's Lynn suggest that any excavation in the historic core of the town has, because of its topographic location, the potential to reveal organic material well-preserved due to waterlogging. The 1960s excavations in the town revealed wooden quays and wharves, wattle fences, wooden posts, nails and spoons as well as bone, leather and textiles, with medieval leather being found 'on all excavated sites and on most building sites';¹⁴ the closest of them to the Common Staithe was at the location of Marks and Spencer in Surrey Street and revealed organic material including wattle fences, a wooden bench, and leather and bone.¹⁵ An excavation on the same site in 2008 described the preservation of bone and plant macrofossils as 'good' and 'very good' respectively, and the vast majority of plant remains as waterlogged; some distortion of the plant macrofossils had occurred due to compression.¹⁶ During the excavation in 1977 at Fell's Warehouse just across the Tuesday Market Place, several wooden stakes and a plank protruded through the lowest deposit excavated. At 5.4mOD water filled the trench, but the excavator noted 'a great depth of well-preserved and extremely complex archaeological deposits'.

Excavations were undertaken at Thoresby College, at the bottom of Queen Street near where it joins the Saturday Market Place – some way from the Common Staithe, but a possibly comparable site in terms of its nearness to past and present riverbanks. One of the principal discoveries was a section of late 13th century 'wooden wharf. 4 upright posts supporting horizontal planks of spruce ... heavily waterlogged conditions caused them to be very well preserved'.¹⁷ There were also deposits on what had, when the wharf was built, been the bed of the river, interpreted as deliberately thrown into the river at the period the wharf was operating and thus of similar date.

Excavations on the site of Raynham House (NHER 5530), perhaps the same distance from the Common Staithe but in an easterly direction, produced finds described as 'exceptional' due to the waterlogged nature of the lower deposits and also the lack of post-medieval development, with waterlogging being present at 1.15m below ground level (c 4.4m OD) and preserving artefacts such as leather, mineralised rope and textile as well as a wide range of plant and animal remains.¹⁸ It was also noted that 'environmental indicators also survived well in waterlogged remains'.¹⁹ The condition of most of the excavated animal bone was also described as 'very good' and there was 'no evidence for any post-depositional damage' bar some fragmentation and gnawing.²⁰

Whilst some parts of the Common Staithe have seen post-medieval redevelopment, others remain open, and there could be a parallel level of preservation in some areas. Equally, riverbank finds similar to those at Thoresby are possible. The peats and fine-grained silts and clays on which King's Lynn stands may also preserve evidence of past activities and the wider environment, including climate change.

Environment

Any excavation in historic King's Lynn has the potential to reveal a great deal of information about past environments. The town is located on 10m of 'deeply stratified sequences of reclaimed estuarine and marine sediments...[and] comprise material relating to former tidal/intertidal environments such as sand and clays, peats and channel sequences, alongside several freshwater channels' with the marine sequences beginning 1-2m below the modern ground surface'.²¹ These types of tidal and intertidal deposits have the potential to preserve evidence of changes in the environment and climate over time as indicated by foraminifera, ostracods, plant remains, charcoal, wood, shells, animal bones and insect remains; the excavations in the Corn exchange found a large and diverse assemblage of foraminifera.²²

Complexity

Excavations on the Common Staithe have the potential to reveal occupation sequences which have not been truncated by 20th-century development. Little is known about the layout of the site before the 16th century, and property boundaries may have changed more than once over the centuries. It seems reasonable to assume that there would have been medieval buildings on the eastern part of the HAZ site, although not necessarily, as may be the case elsewhere in the town, all timber-framed; the building with the arches was at least partly flint and stone, and 50 King Street, 13th-14th century, not far east, was mainly flint.

Excavations at 46 King Street revealed a sequence of medieval building floors from the 12th to 15th centuries.²³ A very limited excavation through the floor of a room in Lattice House two blocks east, undertaken in 1979.²⁴ The excavation struggled to interpret the deposits but describes an 'extraordinary survival of complex stratification and wall foundations immediately below a layer associated with the construction of the late medieval building',²⁵ suggesting that even where late medieval buildings were constructed, evidence for earlier medieval activity can survive.

Where medieval or 16th/17th century buildings survived into the 20th century, and their sites were never redeveloped, there is thus the potential for an undisturbed sequence of occupation deposits stretching back perhaps to the 13th century. This seems likely to apply to Birtledene and the strip of land to the east of it; the Birtledene site seems totally untouched, as does the strip as far east as the public lavatories (which are at the HAZ boundary).

The area of the open yard north of the warehouses may contain undisturbed medieval foundations, if one can postulate its having originally been built on before being cleared perhaps in the 16th century.

Impact of Later Development

Buildings constructed since the 16th century often replaced medieval buildings in similar positions. Subject to what has been said in the previous paragraphs, the foundations of such buildings must have had an impact on earlier deposits. More damaging may have been the extensive vaults known to have existed on parts of the site, notably the south-east (to the west of the present public lavatories), and the reservoir underneath part of the northern end, described more fully in section 2.7. The disappointing results of the Corn Exchange excavations was attributed by Bates in part to later cellars.²⁶

Conclusion

Any buried deposits are likely to reveal valuable information about one of the key public sites of post-medieval Lynn, and one which has so far tended to be absent from the discourse on the town's maritime and mercantile history. They should also be able to add more information to the picture that has emerged over the past half-century as to how the waterfront moved and developed; that the Common Staithe was one of the few sections of the riverside to have a quay makes its evidence especially important. They are also likely to help answer questions about what Lynn looked like in the medieval period and the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries (notably as to the balance between different building materials). Taken together, all this information could radically increase our knowledge of an important national and international trading centre.

See Historic England 2016 *Preserving Archaeological Remains: Decision-taking for Sites Under Development* (Swindon: Historic England) for further information on assessing the archaeological potential of sites.

Endnotes

¹ I am greatly indebted to my colleague Sarah Newsome for her thoughts on the archaeological potential of the Common Staithe, and this section owes much to the similar section in Newsome, S 2018 *Chapel Street and St Nicholas Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk: The History and Archaeology of the Chapel Street Car Park* (Historic England Research Report) Swindon: Historic England.

² Bates 41-60; King's Lynn and West Norfolk Community Services, *passim*

³ Clarke and Carter 162-63 (1165 KLY)

⁴ H Parker 1965 'A Medieval Wharf in Thoresby College Courtyard, King's Lynn', *Medieval Archaeology* 9 94-104.

⁵ Bates 41-59

⁶ Bates 47-48

⁷ B S Nenck, S Margesson and M Hurley 1996 'Medieval Britain and Ireland in 1995' *Medieval Archaeology* XLII 234-318

⁸ Clarke and Carter 108.

⁹ TF62SW217

¹⁰ TF62SW176

¹¹ TF62 SW175

- ¹² <http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/gyam> accessed 29 Nov 2017
- ¹³ Newsome, citing Ken Hamilton pers comm.
- ¹⁴ Clarke and Carter, 349
- ¹⁵ Clarke and Carter, 16; 1163 KLY; NHER 1163
- ¹⁶ M Boyle 2008 *An Archaeological Investigation at Marks and Spencer, King's Lynn, Norfolk*. NAU Archaeology Report 1732 15-16
- ¹⁷ Clarke and Carter 108
- ¹⁸ Cope-Faulkner 74; 76
- ¹⁹ Cope-Faulkner 76
- ²⁰ Cope-Faulkner 56
- ²¹ Lillie M and R J Smith 2011 'Chapter 5. Environmental Monitoring' in R Brown R and A Hardy 2011 *Archaeology of the Newland: Excavations in King's Lynn, Norfolk 2003-5*. East Anglian Archaeology 140
- ²² Bates 51
- ²³ Grant J, K Nicholson and I Williamson 2004 *Land to the rear of 46 King Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk: Trial Trench Evaluation*. Archaeological Solutions Report No. 161112-13
- ²⁴ NRHE Event 640008; NHER12005
- ²⁵ Rogerson A 1979 *Site 1159 KLY* Norfolk Archaeological Unit, unpublished report, 2
- ²⁶ Bates 58

6 CONCLUSION

The Common Staithe contains a collection of buildings with interesting histories, and five listed structures surround it – the Crown and Mitre, the Globe, Gurney’s, the Corn Exchange and 18 Tuesday Market Place.

The warehouses are well-preserved examples of late Georgian store buildings, their shallow-pitched slate hipped roofs contrasting as strongly with the earlier, steep-gabled, pantiled warehouses as do the low-pitched brown brick Regency houses with their small-windowed, steep-pitched predecessors. The inclusion of a Magazine adds interest.

The Baths, while foreign to the historic function of the Common Staithe, are notable as the sixth-oldest to survive in the country, retaining some original features. It is uncertain how they compare to the other survivors, and our understanding of how it was originally used remains partly conjectural.

The Pilot Office is an example of a maritime building type which seems little-studied – the tower which is for observation, not a lighthouse or a seamark; it perhaps relates to the house-top lantern or gallery sometimes known as a captain’s walk or widow’s walk. The records of the Conservancy Board and its predecessors remain to be fully explored.

Architecturally, the Baths are a typical Italianate minor public building of their date. Newham’s Pilot Office, joining together two rather disparate existing structures, the Buoy Stores and the Baths, is successful, more ‘Victorian’ with its arch-topped windows, but, with the tower, a successful composition, especially when viewed from the north-west as an approaching ship would see it.

The Quay itself remains, albeit heavily rebuilt and for much of its length buried in a car park. It is possible that the reservoir which flushed out the berths may also survive, buried under the same car park.

Further interest is added by the survival of the curiously-ignored medieval arcade, currently elsewhere, and of some old fabric, re-used in the 1829 warehouse; this is likely to be early-modern, but the stone suggests the possibility of some medieval elements, not impossible if from a structure towards the east of the site.

Much has of course been lost. The earliest buildings on the site have disappeared except for the arcade. Only a few walls and some re-used fabric possibly survive from the extensive complex built in the century after the Reformation. It disappeared in phases – on the east, to a fine Queen Anne marketplace mansion, to the north to wholesale clearance in the late 1820s for a new market hall, and to the south, piecemeal and seemingly aimless demolition from the 1850s to the 1960s.

Replacement structures have themselves succumbed – the Market Hall to the Corn Exchange, the old Corn Exchange to the 1990s arts centre.

The real importance of the Common Staithe is not any individual building but as a whole, as a site which has been at the heart of this great port town since the Middle Ages and (*floreat* the Conservancy Board) is still at its heart (Fig. 132). It is fascinating that its basic form, of a U-shape with the opening on the river side, has survived, and still survives today. Unlike the more restricted focus of the Hanseatic Warehouse further south, it was a centre for a wide range of merchants and townspeople. It is a significant component of the ‘Story of Lynn’, which cannot properly be understood without it.



Fig. 132 King's Lynn remains a significant port. A cargo ship enters the docks to the north of the Common Staithe under the directions of the Harbourmaster and his staff from the Pilot Office. View from the Pilot Office tower. Photograph: Jonathan Kewley 3-JUL-2017
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