

Idiots Guide to the History of King's Lynn

Before 1100 – Saxon Beginnings	A small coastal community formed around tidal lagoons between the Millfleet and River Nar. Economy based on fishing and salt-making.
1100 – 1150 – Founding of the Medieval Town	Bishop Herbert de Losinga of Norwich founded the new town and began construction of the Priory Church of St Margaret on reclaimed land.
1150 – 1300 – Expansion under Episcopal Patronage	Bishop Turbe extended the town northwards, creating the 'newe lands' between the Purfleet and Fisherfleet, with Tuesday Market Place and St Nicholas's Chapel.
1300 – 1500 – Hanseatic Era	Lynn became England's third largest port, trading wool, wine, timber and luxury goods. The Hanseatic Warehouse was built around 1475. Merchant houses and warehouses such as Hampton Court, Clifton House and Thoresby College were established.
1500 – 1600 – Reformation and Local Autonomy	Monastic institutions dissolved; St Margaret's Priory and friaries suppressed. Greyfriars Tower preserved as a seamark in 1545. Merchant governance strengthened.
1600 – 1750 – Prosperity and Georgian Refinement	Henry Bell's 1670 plan shows the area fully developed. The 1741 storm destroyed a spire of St Margaret's Church; the nave was rebuilt (1742–46). The Walks laid out from 1753 onwards as one of England's earliest public parks.
1800 – 1880 – Industrialisation and Rail Expansion	1774-1821 Whaling Industry. London Road (1803–06) opened southern access. The railway arrived in 1844, causing decline in coastal trade. Alexandra Dock (1869) and Bentinck Dock (1883) served larger ships. Heavy engineering and shipbuilding flourished.
1880 – 1914 – Late Victorian and Edwardian Years	Construction of schools, almshouses and public buildings including the Carnegie Library (1904–05). South Quay rebuilt with brick and stone walls (1855).
1914 – 1945 – Interwar and Early 20th Century	Maritime trade declined; light industry and food processing developed. War memorial erected in Tower Gardens (1921). Head Post Office opened (1938).

**1945 – 1970 –
Redevelopment
and Overspill
Growth**

Campbell's Soup factory opened (1958). London Overspill Scheme (1962) doubled the population. One fifth of the historic centre was redeveloped. King's Lynn Conservation Area designated (1969).

**1970 – 2000 –
Conservation and
Regeneration**

Conservation area extended (1979); Article 4 Direction introduced (1983). Warehouses restored and converted for housing and offices. South Quay and King's Staithe Square revitalised (1999–2000).

**2003 – Present –
Heritage
Protection**

Single large conservation area divided into five zones (2003), including St Margaret's Area. Ongoing waterfront regeneration and conversion of historic warehouses for residential and cultural use.
