

**NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES LTD**  
**RIBBA HALL FARM, BISHOPDALE, NORTH YORKSHIRE**  
**Negative Watching Brief Report**

**Site name:** Ribba Hall Farm

**Grid reference:** SD 96715 83460

**Parish:** Aysgarth

**District:** Richmondshire

**County:** North Yorkshire

**Administrative authority:** Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA)

**Client:** Ashleigh Moorhouse

**Planning application reference:** R/53/24A

**Site supervisor:** Steven Collison

**Project manager:** Penny Middleton

**Fieldwork Date(s):** 25/3/2019 & 7/9/2019

**NAA project number:** 1459

**Site code:** RHF19

**NAA report number:** 19/95

**Report date:** 26 September 2019

### **Reasons for watching brief**

Ribba Hall is a 17th-century yeoman farmhouse that is located on the south side of Bishopdale Lane (B6160), Bishopdale, North Yorkshire (Fig. 1). The farmhouse is located at the north end of the building, with an attached byre and barn range to the south. As a response to condition 11 of the planning consent (R/53/24A) for the conversion of the attached byre and barn to provide holiday accommodation, Ashleigh Moorhouse, the owner, commissioned Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) to prepare a scheme of archaeological mitigation, outlined in a written scheme of investigation (WSI) (NAA 2018a). Full details can be found in that document, including archaeological and historic background. Broadly however, the WSI detailed two requirements to fulfil condition 11 of the planning consent: firstly, a programme of building recording on the byre and barn, and secondly, a programme of archaeological monitoring (a watching brief) of subsurface ground works on all parts of the development, but especially the footings for an extension to the north and the removal of a cobbled surface to the south.

The results of the building recording have been published separately as *Ribba Hall Outbuilding Building Recording Report* (NAA 2018b). This document presents the results of the monitoring phase of the mitigation scheme only.

## **Results (Fig. 2)**

Groundworks were monitored by an archaeologist on two separate days. The first, on the 25th March 2019, was for the footings of the extension to the north of the main farmhouse, hereafter called Trench 1. The second, on the 7th September 2019, was to monitor the removal of the cobbled surface to the south of the former byre and the excavation of a channel for drainage of a new surface, hereafter called Trench 2.

The works were carried out in accordance with the WSI with variations detailed as necessary below.

### **Trench 1 (Fig. 3)**

Trench 1 was excavated using a 5.5t tracked excavator initially fitted with a toothless trenching bucket. However difficult ground conditions, i.e. the presence of large boulders within the natural deposits, required the use of a toothed trenching bucket. Extra time was allowed for the attending archaeologist to tidy and inspect the trench accordingly.

The footings for the new extension were excavated abutting the north-west face of the existing farmhouse. The trench (Fig. 2) was between 0.8m and 1.0m wide, extended for 8.6m northeast to southwest, 4.4m northwest to southeast and was excavated up to 1.0m below ground level. The ground sloped sharply to the northwest requiring steps to be excavated at the base of the trench. The extant ground surface (1) was topsoil consisting of fine dark grey loamy clay 0.1m in thickness at the top of the slope and increasing in thickness to 0.3m at the base of the slope. This directly overlay the natural glacial clay deposit (2), which was stiff yellowish blue-grey clay with frequent mineral inclusions and large (up to 1.1m) diameter sub-rounded glacial boulders throughout.

### **Trench 2 and Area of Cobble Removal (Fig. 4)**

The area on the south-east side of the byre involved two pieces of work: firstly, the removal of the extant cobbled surface, and secondly, the excavation of a drainage channel for a new surface-water drain in front of the southern range. Both activities were carried out using a 3.5t tracked excavator fitted with a toothed trenching bucket. This was required due to the well-constructed nature of the cobbled surface and the difficult ground conditions mentioned above. Extra time was allowed for the attending archaeologist to tidy and inspect the excavated areas.

The extant cobbled surface (4) was removed within the area as shown in Fig. 2, extending approximately 19.5m by 5m in front of the southern range. It consisted of a single course of sub-rounded river cobbles <0.25m in diameter laid in unbonded fashion. The cobbles sat directly on top of a coarse bedding layer (3) of sand and gravel with sub-angular stone inclusions. A shallow trench (Trench 2) was excavated through layer 3 in order to facilitate a new surface-water drain. The trench extended for 10m, was 0.9m wide and was up to 0.3m deep at the northern end, shallowing out as it extended south. Layer 3 was seen in section in the trench and varied in depth between 0.1 and 0.15m. It sat directly on top of the natural glacial deposit (2), which was the same as that seen in Trench 1.

## Discussion

No archaeological material was observed or recovered during the works. Natural geology was present at a shallow depth beneath the extant surface deposits and no evidence of prior phases of activity on the site were seen.

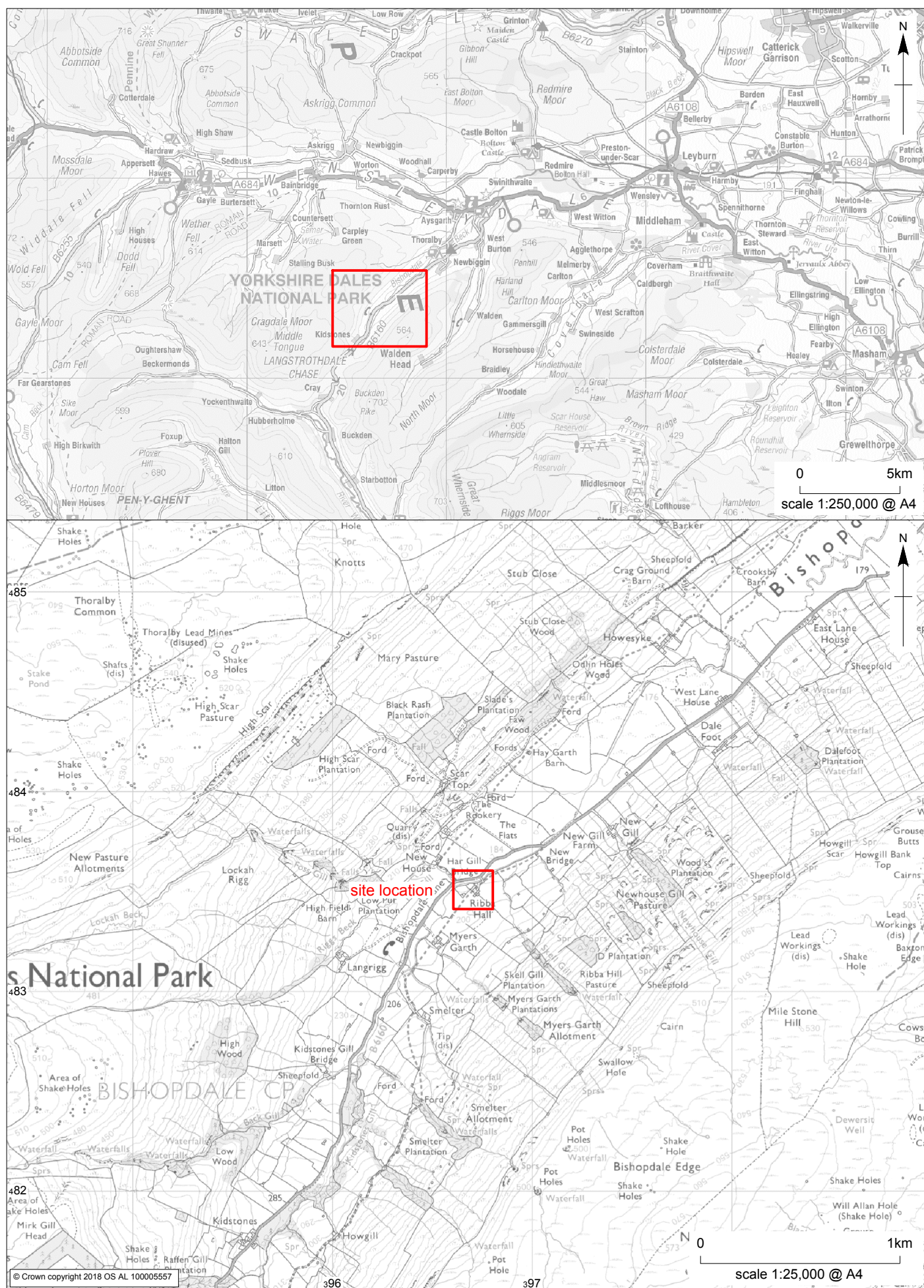
**Documentation:** The paper archive consists of 4 register sheets, 2 trench sheets and 1 drawing sheet.

**Archive deposition:** The paper and digital archive will be deposited in accordance with the WSI. A digital copy of this report will be uploaded to OASIS under OASIS ID northern1-367800.

## References

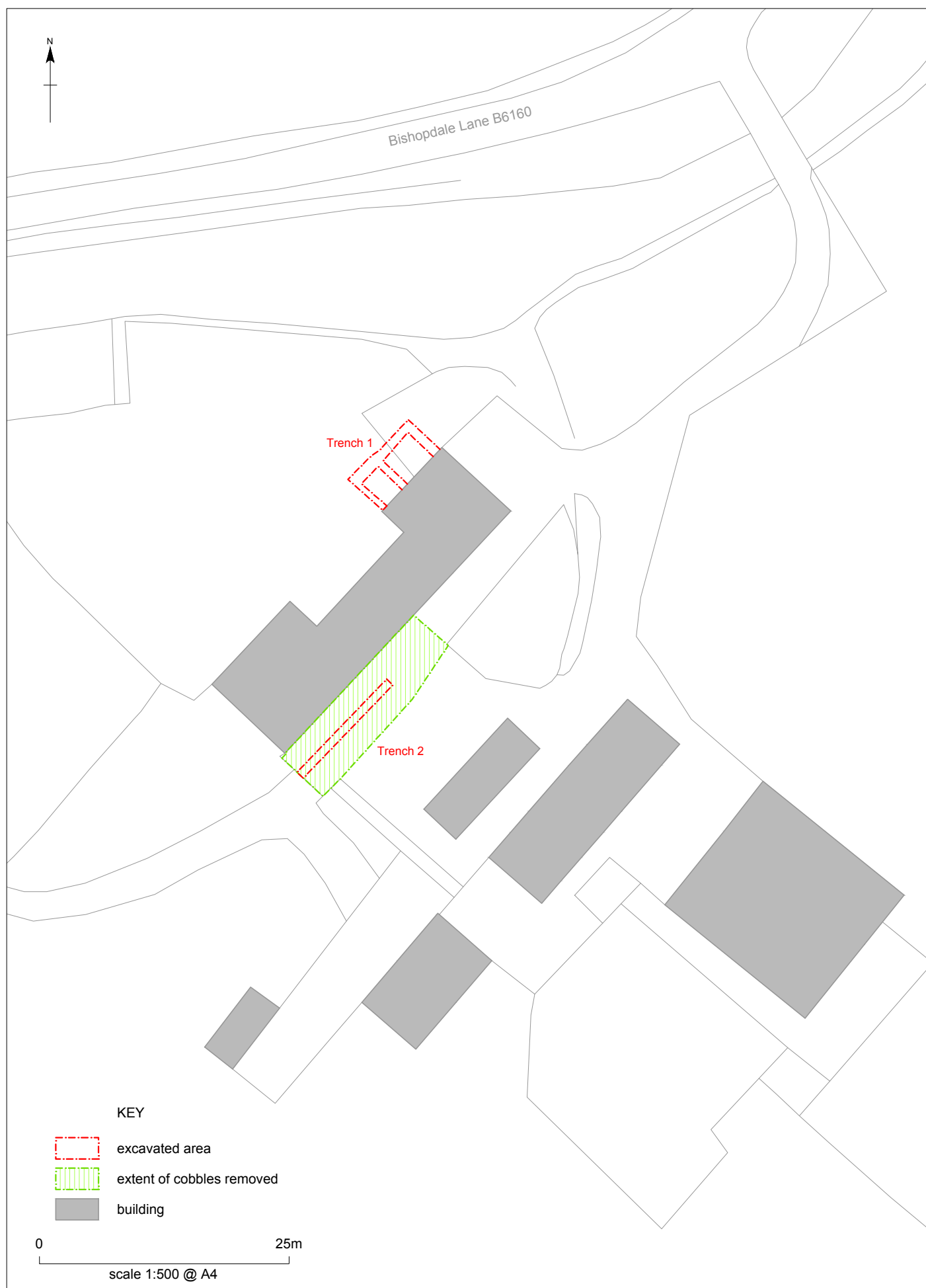
NAA (2018a) *Written Scheme of Investigation for Scheme of Archaeological Building Recording and Monitoring of Outbuildings at Ribba Hall Farm, Bishopdale, North Yorkshire*. NAA 18/73

NAA (2018b) *Ribba Hall Outbuilding Building Recording Report*. NAA 18/87



Ribba Hall Farm, Leyburn: site location

Figure 1







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*Ribba Hall Farm: Trench 1, footings for extension to north of main farm house, looking south-west, 2 x 1m scales*

Figure 3



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*Ribba Hall Farm: south of byre after cobble removal, deposit (3) and trench 2 (centre) with natural (2) at base, scales 0.5m and 1m*

Figure 4