

NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES LTD

REPLACEMENT AGRICULTURAL BUILDING, LITTLETHORPE FARM

Negative Watching Brief Report

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| Site name: Littlethorpe Farm, Rudston | Grid reference: TA 102 695 |
| Parish: Rudston | County: East Riding of Yorkshire |
| Administrative Authority: East Riding of Yorkshire Council | Date: 23/2/12 |
| Development: Replacement agricultural building | NAA Project number: 1051 |
| Client: Mr J W Gatenby | Contractor: P Gardham |
| Planning application reference: DC/11/04205/PLF/EASTNN | Site code: n/a |
| Monitoring Archaeologist: Kevin Collins | Project Manager: Oliver Cooper |

Reasons for watching brief

Littlethorpe Farm (Figure 1), within the hinterland of the village of Rudston, lies on the eastern side of the valley of the Gypsy Race, an area that was a major focus of activity during the prehistoric period. The most significant heritage asset within the vicinity is Argam Dike (Figure 2), a later Bronze Age linear boundary, originally extending from near Rudston to Reighton. This is a Scheduled Monument (SM ER87) and considered to be of national importance (The National Heritage List for England, online). Although much of the monument has been ploughed away in antiquity, the best preserved section is 100m to the east of Littlethorpe Farm, where two banks and ditches survive as earthworks.

Within the wider area, much of the evidence for activity is interpreted from cropmarks identified on aerial photographs, but the date and significance of many of the features has been confirmed by archaeological excavation and fieldwalking. The Rudston area includes Neolithic cursus monuments and monolith (standing stone); a Neolithic to Bronze Age henge; and large numbers of burials of Bronze Age and Iron Age date. Later prehistoric and Roman settlements are also well represented in the area. A number of Iron Age to Roman quernstones have been ploughed up on the farmland to the east of Argam Dike (Gatenby, pers. comm.), suggesting a possible location for settlement of that date. Recent fieldwork associated with a new water pipeline recorded extensive Iron Age and Roman activity some 2km to the east of Littlethorpe (NAA in prep).

A settlement at Rudston was recorded in Domesday, the place-name derived from Old English for rood-stone (Ekwall 1960, 395), and referring to the Neolithic standing stone, which is now enclosed by the churchyard. The Church of All Saints, although much reconstructed during the 19th century, has Norman elements (Carter 1976, 80), and it is possible that an earlier church stood on the site.

Littlethorpe farmhouse dates from the mid 18th century and is a Grade II Listed Building (National Heritage List, online: unique ref. 166828). On Ordnance Survey mapping of 1854–90 (Old-maps, online), the farm name is given as Little Thorpe, presumably derived from its location in Thorpe Field, part of the medieval open fields of Rudston. There were no buildings within the vicinity of the new development depicted on mapping until the 1970s revision of the 1:2,500 series.

Results

Before archaeological monitoring commenced, two agricultural Romney sheds (former military buildings) had been demolished, and the site cleared, however rubble remained within the topsoil. Fifteen pits, each 1.6m by 1m, were excavated to take the concrete foundation pads for the frame for the new agricultural building (Figure 3). When the pits were excavated it was noted that the natural geology on the western side of the site, towards the Gypsy Race, was chalk gravel (Plate 1). This presumably represents the eastern limit of the river channel. On the eastern side was chalk bedrock (Plate 2). After the foundation pits had been excavated, the area within the building footprint was graded to provide a more level site. No archaeological features or artefacts were identified.

Table 1. Pit depths and natural deposits encountered

| Pit | Depth | Natural deposits |
|-----|-------|------------------|
| 1 | 0.65m | Chalk gravel |
| 2 | 0.78m | Chalk gravel |
| 3 | 0.80m | Chalk gravel |
| 4 | 0.76m | Chalk gravel |
| 5 | 0.80m | Chalk gravel |
| 6 | 0.80m | Chalk gravel |
| 7 | 1.20m | Chalk bedrock |
| 8 | 1.00m | Chalk bedrock |
| 9 | 1.20m | Chalk bedrock |
| 10 | 1.29m | Chalk bedrock |
| 11 | 0.70m | Chalk bedrock |
| 12 | 0.60m | Chalk gravel |
| 13 | 0.60m | Chalk gravel |
| 14 | 1.10m | Chalk bedrock |
| 15 | 1.40m | Chalk bedrock |

Documentation: Digital photographs

Archive Deposition: Internal archive

Report number: NAA 12/20

Report Date: 24 February 2012

References

Carter R A (1976) *A Visitor's Guide to Yorkshire Churches*. Historic Churches Preservation Trust

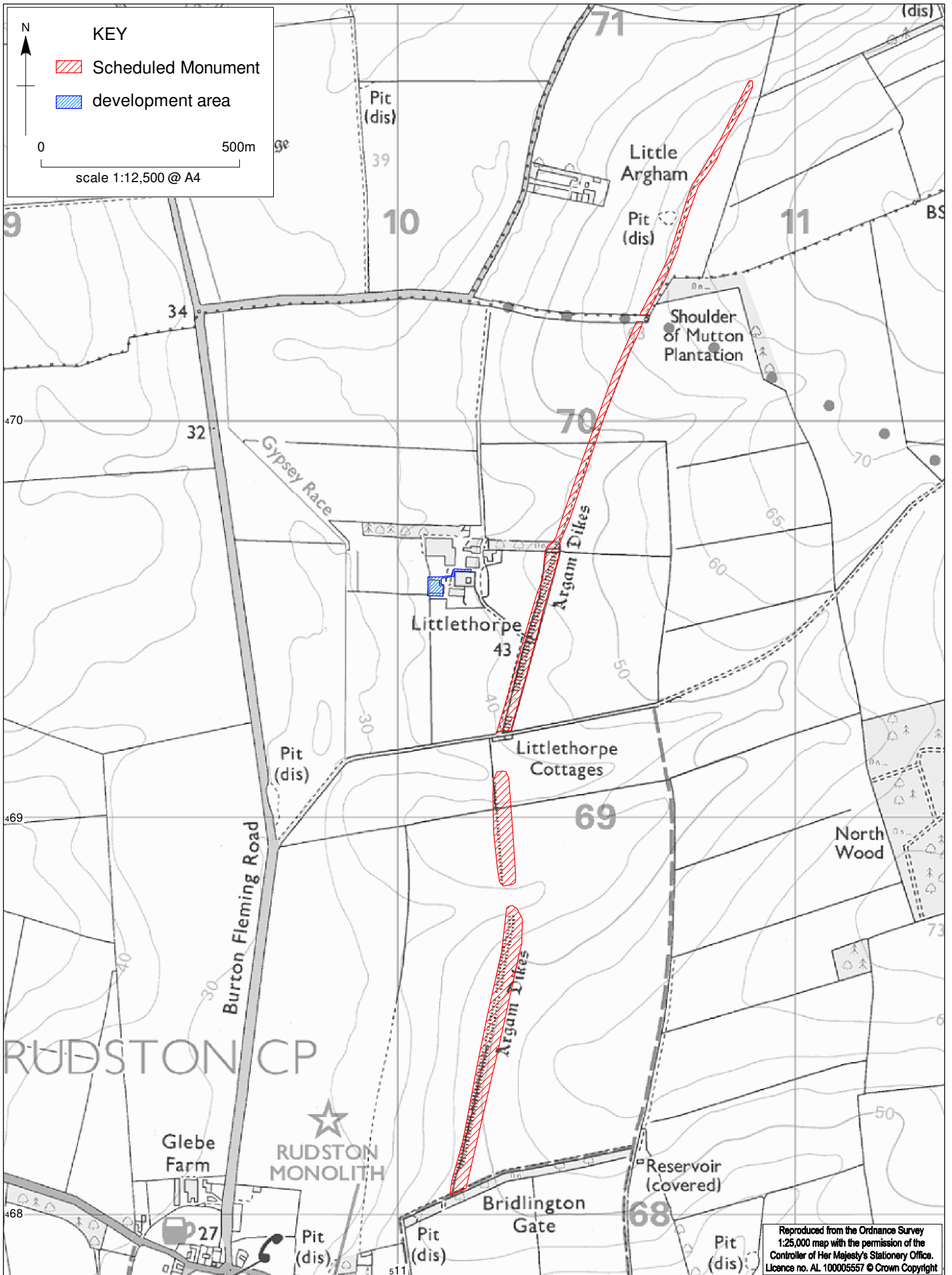
Ekwall E (1960) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Placenames*. Oxford

Northern Archaeological Associates (in prep) *East Coast Pipeline, East Yorkshire: Post-excavation Assessment Report*

Online sources

The National Heritage List for England <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk>

Old-maps <http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html>

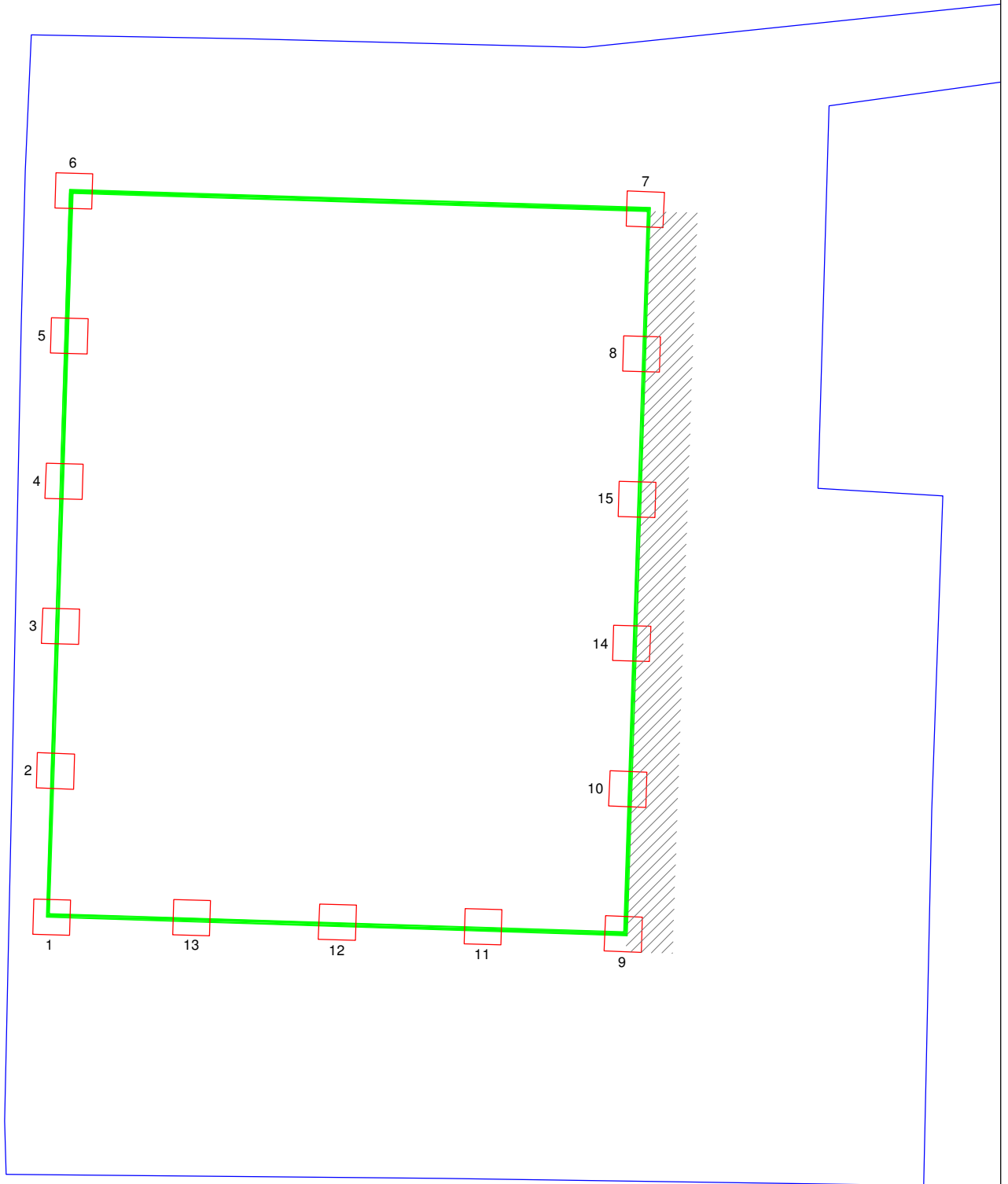


KEY

- proposed building footprint
- development boundary

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

- foundation pit
- area of ground levelling



0 10m
scale 1:250 @ A4

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1:25,000 map with the permission of the
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Littlethorpe Farm: monitoring locations

Figure 3



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Littlethorpe Farm: chalk gravel on western side of building

Plate 1



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Littlethorpe Farm: chalk bedrock on eastern side of building

Plate 2