

Thorpe medieval settlement

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Scheduled Monument**

List Entry Number: **1016978**

Date first listed: **24-Nov-1999**

Location

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: **Lincolnshire**

District: **West Lindsey (District Authority)**

Parish: **Thorpe in the Fallows**

National Grid Reference: **SK 91168 80706**

Reasons for Designation

Medieval rural settlements in England were marked by great regional diversity in form, size and type, and the protection of their archaeological remains needs to take these differences into account. To do this, England has been divided into three broad Provinces on the basis of each area's distinctive mixture of nucleated and dispersed settlements. These can be further divided into sub-Provinces and local regions, possessing characteristics which have gradually evolved during the last 1500 years or more. This monument lies in the Trent sub-Province of the Central Province, where the broad Trent valley swings in a great arc across midland England. Underlain by heavy clays, it is given variety by superficial glacial and alluvial deposits. Although treated as a single sub-Province, it has many subtle variations. Generally, it is characterised by a great number of villages and hamlets which cluster thickly along scarp-foot and scarp-tail zones, locations suitable for exploiting the contrasting terrains. Throughout the sub-Province there are very low and extremely low densities of dispersed farmsteads, some of which are ancient, but most of which are 18th-century and later movement of farms out of earlier villages.

Medieval villages were organised agricultural communities, sited at the centre of a parish or township, that shared resources such as arable land, meadow and woodland. Village plans varied enormously, but when they survive as earthworks their most distinguishing features include roads and minor tracks, platforms on which stood houses and other buildings such as barns, enclosed crofts and small enclosed paddocks. They frequently included the parish church within their boundaries, and as part of the manorial system most villages included one or more manorial centres which may also survive as visible remains as well as below ground deposits. Villages were the most distinctive aspect of medieval life in central England, and their archaeological remains are one of the most important sources of understanding about rural life in the five or more centuries following the Norman Conquest.

The remains of the medieval village of Thorpe survive well as a series of substantial earthworks which, as a result of detailed archaeological survey and historical research, are quite well understood.

Waterlogging in parts of the site will preserve organic remains such as artefacts made from wood, cloth and leather, giving an insight into the lifestyle of the inhabitants. The preservation of plant remains will provide valuable information about the natural environment and climate at the time the village was occupied, as well as for horticultural and agricultural activity in the area. Buried structural remains, including houses and a parish church, will preserve evidence for domestic and religious activity. All of these features contribute to our understanding of the way in which small medieval settlements functioned as components of a wider social and economic landscape.

Details

The monument includes the earthwork remains of the medieval village of Thorpe, a small settlement established before the late 11th century. Documentary evidence for a church at Thorpe first occurs in the

mid-12th century. Throughout the medieval period the parish was divided into four different holdings, some part of monastic estates; during this time the population of the village remained fairly static at about 10-15 households. Following the Dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century, the parish came under the single ownership of the dean and chapter of Lincoln, and in the 17th and 18th centuries the village gradually became depopulated. The church was demolished early in the 17th century, and in the early 18th century the parish was enclosed. Two farms in the village continued working into the 20th century. While the medieval ridge and furrow cultivation remains which formerly surrounded the village have been levelled by modern ploughing, most of the area of the medieval village is still visible as a series of earthworks.

The village of Thorpe is linear in form, stretching along a slight ridge in low-lying land on the eastern side of the Trent Valley. The settlement remains are visible as a series of raised rectangular enclosures, lying adjacent to each other on an east-west alignment and separated by shallow drainage ditches running north-south. Most of these enclosures represent house plots in which the buried remains of medieval dwellings are located. A group of enclosures in the western part of the monument is bounded on the east and north by more substantial water-control features, including broad ditches and linear ponds up to 1m deep; further ponds are situated on the south side of these enclosures adjacent to the present road. This group of remains may represent a single medieval land holding including four or five house plots. The ponds have been altered in the post-medieval and modern periods as they remained in use.

A war memorial near the centre of the settlement marks the site of the medieval church at Thorpe. Located within a raised rectangular enclosure measuring about 50m by 30m and representing the churchyard, the remains of the church survive as buried building foundations. The north eastern corner of the churchyard enclosure is now overlain by spoil from the adjacent pond. The plots immediately to

the east of the churchyard are bounded on the south by a low linear bank, and some include traces of ridge and furrow cultivation beneath the plots indicating a phase of expansion of the village onto earlier arable land.

The war memorial and all fences and gates are excluded from the scheduling although the ground beneath these features is included.

MAP EXTRACT The site of the monument is shown on the attached map extract.

Legacy

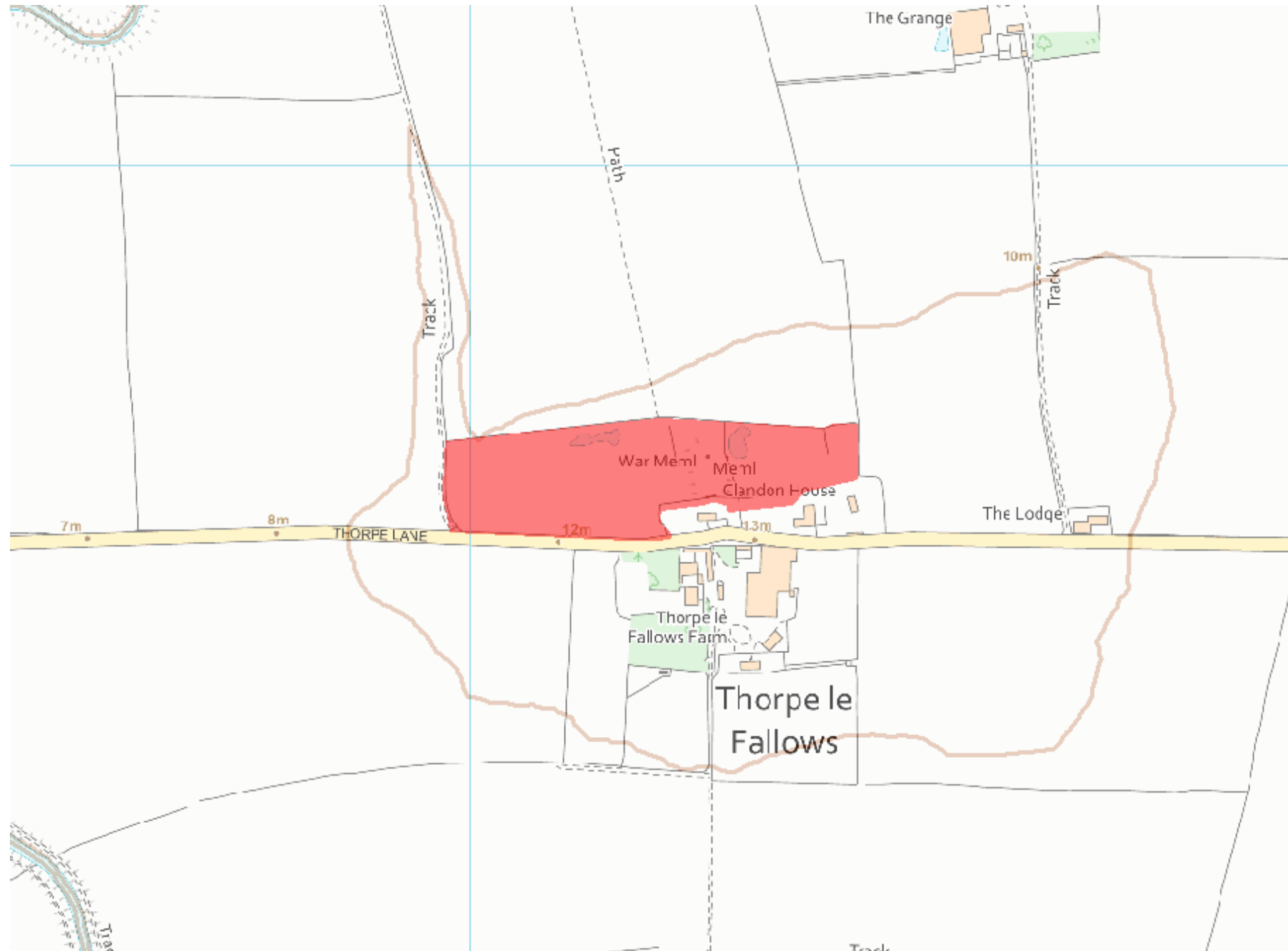
The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: **22761**

Legacy System: **RSM**

Legal

This monument is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as amended as it appears to the Secretary of State to be of national importance. This entry is a copy, the original is held by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.



Map

This map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. This copy shows the entry on 23-Nov-2023 at 10:40:48.

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